

LIFE, AND LETTERS TO-DAY

continuing

The LONDON MERCURY and BOOKMAN

Edited by ROBERT HERRING

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NO. 32

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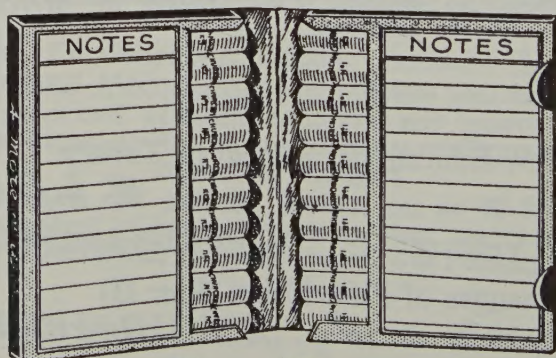
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Cover Design by Kenneth Macpherson

Swiss Correspondent—W. Bryher

Paris Correspondent—Sylvia Beach

New York Correspondent—Kenneth Macpherson

The Editor is glad to consider manuscripts though he cannot enter into correspondence on unsolicited contributions. All manuscripts should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope.

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NEW CONTRIBUTORS

W. L. CARTER was in the last war at the age of seventeen. Wounded, he was in a military hospital for two and a half years and subsequently spent many months regaining his health by studying wild flowers in this country. From this, he began to collect old roses (having many of those grown by the Empress Josephine at Malmaison). He visited many sites of the Near East in search of flowers; although these are his main interest, he has made many lengthy visits to Turkey in recent years, during which he "was able to study the new educational system at first hand". He is a Fellow of the Linnean Society and has just completed a book, *Old Roses*, to be published this autumn. He will contribute to the next number an article on flowers in classical antiquity.

* * *

EDITH SITWELL'S Anthology (Gollancz) has just appeared and will be reviewed by Charles Williams in the next issue. She is now working at "an enormous book on the subject of poetry", and also on an anthology ostensibly for children but pleasing, she hopes, to children and adults alike.

* * *

PATRICK EVANS was born in December, 1913, and brought up a Quaker. He has been a private tutor in Greece; a secretary of an antiquarian and patriotic board in London; and is now a free-lance journalist. He has contributed to *The Booster*, *Delta*, *Time and Tide*, *New English Weekly*, *The 19th Century and After*,

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and *Horizon*. He is finishing his first novel for this year's Spring list, and has previously appeared in book form in the Fortune Press *Proems*.

* * *

JOHN BAYLISS, twenty, registered as a conscientious objector on condition that he completes his studies, is Review Editor of *The Cambridge University Journal*; has contributed to *The Cornhill*; and had a sonnet in *The Best Poems of 1938*.

* * *

A. C. SEWTER is the editor of *The Burlington Magazine*. He has recently contributed a poem to *The Listener*, and appeared two years ago in "a little surrealist anthology edited by Herbert Read".

* * *

RUSSELL FERGUSON, now in the Film Publicity Division of the Ministry of Information, was formerly in charge of film distribution at the G.P.O. Previously an English master at a Scottish school. He "writes very little, and that mainly on films. Prefers good films to bad films. Seldom goes to cinemas".

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The LONDON MERCURY and BOOKMAN

Under the Editorship of ROBERT HERRING

APRIL

EDITORIAL

1940

SYMPATHY FOR THE Swedes would seem to be the ironic outcome of the end of the Finnish war. The Finns need none. They were not beaten, and their spirit can never be lowered in the eyes of the world. The Swedes have already lost much, whatever else they may be called on to lose in the future. But it may be found finally that the Finns, who fought, were old-fashioned, and that the Swedes, who did not, actually fought with a newer weapon—the weapon which ends wars, by making aid and alliances impossible, by breaking clearly with any inconvenient nonsense about helping one's neighbour, and by instituting the new Scandinavian game of *saue qui peut*.

Dismayed as we may be at having to learn the rules of this game, instead of telling others that they break the rules of ours, we may do worse than consider our position at home.

At first sight, it seems encouraging. Art being among the most important of the things for whose continuance we flatter ourselves that we fight, it is encouraging that proposals have been made to safeguard those in whose hands lies its future. On 2nd March, there appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* a letter, by ten experienced and distinguished men and women, who suggested that "if irreparable damage to our cultural life is to be avoided", there should be set up "a council to advise

the Ministry of Labour to reserve some measure of our talent and devise the best means of its employment in this emergency". These men and women, none under middle age, pointed out that "artists are of more value to their country in their trained capacity, often in key-positions, than serving generally with the fighting forces".

To these widely-held and scarcely revolutionary views, a lady (Madge Campion, 24 Woodstock Road, Carshalton) was stung to enquire "Of what use will be works of art in a devastated and brutalized world?" Despite her claim to "an unbounded admiration of and gratitude towards" artists, this lady really thinks that "in times such as these the men who can build a ship or plough a field or breed a pig are of more use to the community". She does not say if she would have artists taught to do these things, which up till now their gifts and activities in other directions have prevented them from doing. She feels that "every man and woman should bear the burden equally"—without considering that a composer and a coal-heaver need different jobs if they are to perform equal service.

Her letter is in the familiar English strain of distrust of art, which makes me feel that what our artists continue to need protection from is the English public. More serious is a letter in the same issue (9.3.40). Lord Esher reported that "for many months" he had been "working on a scheme to save from destruction a very limited number of creative artists of such promise or performance that their loss would be a disaster to the community". There would seem little to be said against that. But that little was said.

The reply of the military authority was courteous and considered. It was thoroughly English in its inability to distinguish between the creative imagination and brilliant talent in scholarship or the professions. But, while admitting that the military loss would be negligible, the main argument relied upon was the unfairness of making exceptions to the principles of service on the doubtful ground of the importance of any individual to the State.

Lord Esher had not proposed that his "very limited number" of artists should be released from military service. He asked only that "the pick of the creative artists under forty, writers, painters and musicians, should be used as soldiers for work of comparative safety".

The population of Great Britain is fifty million. The "very limited number of artists" selected was—fifty.

Anxious as Great Britain is to fight for the survival of "all that makes life worth living", authority cannot accord straightforward privilege to one out of a million.

We will safeguard works of art—but not those who produce them. We will brick up and sandbag, to prevent from destruction in this war, the memorials of another. And those who might, in the future, give us memorials of things far more fitting to remember, we will ignore, treat like the rest, like those with neither creativeness nor imagination, and call it fair play.

That is the spirit which we show to the world, and we show it blandly, after having roused outcry at the Nazi hounding of artists from their borders. It is at least encouraging if that spirit is one of the things about us which let neutrals inform us to set first our own house in order. The Finns have shown what spirit is, in war and in peace between wars. Let us look to our own.

NEWS REEL

APRIL, 1940

MANY REVIEWS, OF books which were neither by Welshmen nor Welsh in matter, were held over from the last number. The review section this month is, therefore, larger than usual. H. E. Bates's story runs to 23 pages, which is a quarter of the whole issue. In consequence, there has been less room for articles. Those there are, on Cotton and Turkey, have a Near Eastern bias which, between going to press and being on sale, may turn out to be not inappropriate. In addition, the diary of Geotgiana Sitwell is continued from the February issue, and followed by a new poem by her great-niece, Edith Sitwell. Though Miss Sitwell has often contributed articles and reviews, this is the first time that a poem by her has appeared in this journal. Indeed, all except one of the poets in this number are new to these pages.

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MONEY TALKS

It used to be that "if you ask no questions, you'll get told no lies". In this war, whether you question or not, you may be pretty sure of lies. And if you swallow them, you get a tit-bit—another little bit of news from cold storage. The British public behaved itself well during the first six months of the war. On its entry into the seventh, it was accordingly rewarded with hints of "a possible Allied-Turkish offensive in the spring in the Black Sea".

In its article containing this information, the *Daily Telegraph* of 4th March contained an amusing misprint :

“ *La République*, the French edition of the *Cumhuriyet*, the leading Istanbul organ, writes somewhat significantly

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As regards (*sic*) any campaign which might be attempted against Iran”, etc.

What the pound is doing just there, it is not our business to say, but it may be observed that it is not the first time that sterling has been misplaced.

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SUBURBAN MUSEUMS

“ You will be glad to hear,” said one female curator of one local museum, “ that all *this* will soon be moved to safety.” *This* was—a hornet’s nest, a stuffed peacock which had belonged to the manor house when there had been a manor house, and a dusty model in dove-dung clay that was supposed to show how beautiful the neighbourhood had been before the advent of the jerry builder—no grass, one movable tree and undulations of dove-dung clay. In vanishing London such suburban museums are a vanishing delight. The one we visited—the hornet’s nest, the peacock, and the model—is typical of most ; but our one has a special feature. This special feature sidles towards the visitor as he is about to leave and points to a slate, decorated with a mark such as might have been left by our friends the doves, and a number of scratchings. The scratchings include a name, a date, and “ *Laus Deo* ”. The special feature, in skull cap and toothless smile, says, “ This may interest you, sir. You will never guess what made that mark. That, sir, was lightning.” We thought that he believed the lightning had written “ *Laus Deo* ”, a

name and a date, all rather badly. That miracle pulled us up with a jerk, and we asked a straight question which solved the mystery. The whole incident was sixty years old, and all the lightning had done was to enter into competition with the doves. The special feature had added the scratchings, presented the slate to the museum, donned a skull cap, and become an antiquarian from that day. He had never missed a Wednesday or Saturday afternoon, when the museum is open to its public. "But now," he said on our departure, "all this is to be moved, including the slate. I shall miss it very much, in fact, I really don't know what I shall do."

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RATIONS AND RATS

Rationing has led me to be at some pains to collect a few recipes for our lesser-known meats. Hedgehogs, wrapped in a ball of clay and roasted in ashes, are familiar to most. Not so many are aware that the red squirrel, which has been feeding on hazel nuts, is a far superior dish to young rabbit. The traditional way of killing the squirrel is by throwing the squail, a short stick loaded with lead. The hams of a badger, hot or cold, are considered a delicacy; they should be cured by smoking. Brown rats, taken from corn-stacks or country hedges immediately after they have been weaned, may be stuffed with breadcrumbs and sweet herbs, and roasted in a quick oven, when they are not unlike snipe. A little experimenting, and, when the time comes, we shall all be ready to fly among the grasshoppers, nip off their wings, sprinkle them with pepper and salt, and arrange them gently in the frying pan.

HERBALISM

Herbs, also, many will be relying on more than hitherto. But herbs have their own mysteries. Parsley is a seed which takes an unconscionable time to germinate in the ground, because it has to pay its respects to the devil, by travelling nine times to the centre of the earth, before it can appear above ground. Parsley, in olden days, was a proper plant to strew on graves ; and the phrase " to be in need of parsley " meant to be at death's door. Fennel also has a gloomy past : " sow fennel, sow sorrow." The sight of mint would once make a cat cry. Those were the days when mint was a rival to cat and was sprinkled in corners, to keep mice out of the house. " Crocodile's tears " are part of the legend that saffron is a cure for the bite of a crocodile : the crocodile is always crying, but his tears are only true when he sees a piece of saffron, antidote to his poison.

Hyssop, the Druidical herb, could only be gathered by those who followed an elaborate ritual ; but tradition has it that he who accidentally treads on hyssop falls asleep, and afterwards wakens to understand the language of birds and animals. As far as we can discover, there is no cure for this. The unfortunate trampler of hyssop has to be lectured by rabbits and robins for the rest of his days.

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THOSE WERE THE WARS

Reviewers of *Admiral's Wife* (Longmans, 12s. 6d.) have—rightly—taken pleasure in Fanny Boscawen's humour, as well as in her affection for her husband (to my ears, the lady doth protest too much) that

they seem not to have noticed the remarkable similarity to our own times which her letters betray. "I have made such profession of my aversion to *groping* that at length I seem to have obtained a dispensation never to visit 'in the dark,'" she wrote, in December, 1756. Again, is there not a familiar ring to "I rejoice extremely at Keppel's taking a small man-of-war; next time I hope it will be a great one. Store ships likewise sound well"? England then, "having engaged in active hostilities," was "at last beginning to prepare for war". New regiments were formed, camps made in Kent and Sussex, and inhabitants of coastal areas were warned to be ready to drive their cattle inland. The French had sixty thousand troops at their ports, two fleets were being fitted out for invasion—but English apathy was such that, despite offers of large bounties to recruits, Hessian and Hanoverian mercenaries had to be brought over to protect the coast. "Five companies passed us about 10 a.m. and I caused to be carried up to the gate some bottles of your American raspberry rum and some brandy . . . they shook their heads wistfully, pointed at their pockets, as much as to say, *personne au logis*, and marched on without being convinced of their mistake. This, however, did not last. . . . They all seemed much pleased and very thankful, and indeed it was peculiarly proper, for it snowed all the time they passed."

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EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY DRAWING-ROOM

"The poor cannot live if wheat is £13 a load, and there seems no natural reason why it should be so; the crops last year and this were fine, and the harvest should be

good. . . . I fancy there must be some vile scheme of monopolizing and hoarding . . . to have famine added to war, God forbid !”

Nevertheless, it was left—perhaps not unnaturally—to her friend Mrs. Montagu to have the word which echoes with least impaired force across nearly two hundred years; “I think one should put one’s son apprentice to a gardener before he goes into the House of Commons, that when he is an unsuccessful politician, he may retire to his garden with some pleasure and skill to boot.”

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THE MOTHER OF MERCURY

Webster suggests that the name of next month may derive from “L, *Maius*, perh. akin to *Maia*, a goddess, daughter of Atlas and mother of Mercury, by Jupiter”. Certainly, it was in that month last year that we took over *The London Mercury*. Be that as it may, next month’s issue will open with an essay on Flowers of Classical Antiquity by W. L. Carter. Rosalinde Fuller, after her Shakespearian season at the Kingsway, will write on her experience of theatrical lodgings. I am happy to state that I have acquired further excerpts from the diary of Georgiana Sitwell, which are later to be published in book form by Messrs. Macmillan. Stories will be contributed by Elizabeth Johnson and James Hanley, and poems by Terence Heywood, Roy Fuller, J. F. Hendry. In addition, there will be included the work by Gordon Jeffery, Owen Dodson, and others, previously announced but unavoidably held over.

THE NEW EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF TURKEY

By W. L. CARTER

MODERN EDUCATION IN Turkey really began in October, 1923, with the accession to power of Kemal Ataturk as President of the Turkish Republic, although it was not until four years later, in a speech to the Republican People's Party—the only one permitted in Turkey—founded by Kemal, that he outlined the proposals which have so changed the life of the country and its people.

The word "education" had small significance in the Turkey of pre-1920. Apart from the few high schools maintained by foreigners—particularly British and American—intended mainly for pupils of their own nationality, but attended by sons—very rarely by daughters—of some of the wealthier Turks, education as known in the western world simply did not exist. There were, of course, the so-called religious schools, where little else was read but the *Koran*. It may be remembered that this was written in Arabic, a language as little understood at first sight as classical Greek by a youthful English pupil. Some of the daughters of wealthy families had a foreign governess, but the remainder were virtually uneducated and were, in fact, discouraged from interesting themselves in matters outside their immediate family circle. There were a few schools for girls, and within their limited sphere—no young woman would be employed in any business or allowed to enter a profession or hold any office—they did good work. Many Turks who could afford to send their sons to a foreign school refused to do so on religious

grounds, although other parents, appreciating the advantages of a good education, sent their sons out of the country to foreign schools and universities. Some of the most important officials and holders of public office in the new Turkey are men whose parents were sufficiently far-sighted to send them abroad to be educated.

It is, however, not correct to say the government of the Sublime Porte either disapproved or was indifferent to the merits of education. It was always resolving to attend to the matter but somehow, in the way those who visited pre-war Turkey will recall, its schemes never got under way or if begun, they stayed unfinished. It was no one's duty to see a thing through from start to finish. I saw one elementary school a year ago flourishing and packed with eager pupils, but whose roof seemed very much newer than the walls. Inquiring if a storm had wrecked the place and it had been repaired, I was told the walls had been built thirty years previously, but that no authority to put on the roof had come along despite repeated applications, pigeon-holed in the fashion so often practised in the Constantinople of the old days. When Ataturk became head of the State, another application was made, and an order to finish the work received within five days, plus instructions to prepare the interior ready for immediate tuition of pupils.

The new Turkey's plans for development of education were agreed upon at the Fourth National Congress held in 1935. It is laid down that the first duty of the citizen—to be “fostered in every degree of education”—is to respect the Turkish State. Teaching methods are to be such as to produce pupils fit to maintain themselves “in material life”. The education given must be

national and patriotic, and free from superstition. This last is obviously intended to refer to the so-called religious schools. Primary education lasts five years, and in agricultural areas must be given the appropriate "slant" suitable for children whose lives will mostly be spent on the land and in some mainly agricultural pursuit. The tuition varies according to the type of agriculture practised in the district. Particular attention is directed to be given to hygiene. Trachoma—Turks call it the Egyptian eye disease—formerly so great a scourge among Turkish children, is now almost eradicated.

In a sparsely populated area, where a single village has insufficient children to justify the building and maintenance of a school and teacher, several villages are amalgamated for educational purposes. If any of them are more than a comfortable walking distance for children to reach the school, these are boarded out in the vicinity.

Secondary schools and a number of junior high-grade schools called *Orta Mektep* already exist in some of the larger towns, but it is intended that at least one shall be maintained in the principal city of each of the fifty-eight *vilayets* or provinces that compose modern Turkey, as well as many others. Pupils pass out from primary schools into these higher-grade institutions by examination and general report in much the same way as those in Britain. University and technical education follow for those who show themselves likely to benefit by it. It is intended there shall be several universities in Turkey in addition to that of Istanbul. There will be no lack of willing students, for no visitor can mistake the burning enthusiasm of modern Turkish youth and girlhood to

acquire education. Curiously enough, there is now little parental opposition to this, although twenty-five years ago the thought of their sons and daughters, especially the latter, daily attending school or university and mixing with the opposite sex would have appalled most Turkish parents.

As yet, of course, Turkey is in a state of flux, so far as education is concerned. The country is in the process of finding itself after having been an almost modern medieval state in many ways until the coming of Kemal. It is difficult for the uninformed foreigner to realize that until October, 1936, no statue was to be found in Turkey. Sculpture of a living or deceased person, or a painting depicting him or her, had long been forbidden on alleged *Koranic* grounds. The first statue—that of Atatürk—was erected at Istanbul. Two years earlier had seen the abolition of the *Medresseh* or Moslem colleges, some of whose buildings now house museums. In 1928 all the religious provisions in the constitution were annulled. In 1931 primary education became compulsory, and another two years saw the western Sunday adopted as the weekly day of rest. Furthermore, Turkish is the official language, with Latin script replacing the former Persian and Arabic.

Some of the schools are local crafts institutes. They give a useful grounding in several crafts likely to be profitable when the pupils leave. Woodwork and basket-making are two of these, and carpet-weaving is another. This last class is attended mainly by young children, but adult women may apply for admission and be accepted. Any Turk who "wants to learn" will generally receive every facility for so doing in whatever subject he or she wishes to study, for many adults have

realized their value in the labour market as illiterates is virtually *nil* when they are competing against the young student of modern Turkey.

Wherever possible, a school is usually built in the most pleasant locality in the district it is to serve. I saw one at Sivas on a small hill with some magnificent distant views, and a pretty countryside below. Incidentally, I was told of a woman teacher there who, in her own small way, had evidently anticipated Kemal's views on education. When she announced her intention of becoming a teacher—she is in her forties—her family simply disowned her as a person who had voluntarily put herself beyond the pale of decency, so prejudiced was the old Turkish etiquette. She taught carpet-weaving to women and girls.

The curriculum of the schools varies considerably. The practical side is stressed more than the purely theoretical, which is natural in a country not too rich, whose commerce, formerly much exploited by foreigners (*not* the British), has now to be developed under Turkish control. The higher education is, however, of a first-class standard and compares favourably with that of any other European country.

It is literally true to say that under Turkish law to-day a person's education never ceases until he or she becomes too old to attend. The State programme of education says it is important to give the general populace a continuous adult education in harmony with the advancement of modern Turkey. To ensure this, the State encourages and protects the *Halk Evi*. These are "People's Houses", and are a combination of our social clubs and centres, schools and cultural institutes.

One of these Houses is to be found in every small town in Turkey, and they are used for a great variety of purposes. Illiterate adults are instructed in reading, writing, and simple arithmetic. Foreign languages are taught, mainly English, French, and German. There are dressmaking and needlework classes for women. The local amateur dramatic, gymnastic, and sports clubs meet under its roof. Usually there is a group practising orchestral and band music in western style, and a large mixed choir. I was told of some excellent chamber music quartets composed of local amateurs to be found at many of the Houses. In addition to all this, and numerous other educational activities, the House is used as a kind of general clinic, where free medical and legal advice may be obtained, and, of course for the political meetings of party members. The teachers are mostly those from local schools; they give their services without reward. Indeed, everything is free at the *Halk Evi*. A pleasing side of their activities is that of furthering the discovery of local talent. Any boy or girl who shows uncommon aptitude in any of the subjects taught at the People's Houses is given assistance to continue his or her studies at the expense of the organization, really the State. Where a pupil is brilliant, he will be sent to the nearest secondary school and, if found satisfactory there, will proceed to the university at no cost to his parents or guardians. Home and family antecedents are ignored, so that the child of a peasant in the humblest of circumstances can become a lawyer, doctor, or, as so many wish, a teacher. An orphaned child is formally adopted by its local *Halk Evi* which acts as guardian until the child becomes able to support itself.

The *Halk Evi* are responsible for keeping village

teachers in their area thoroughly conversant with the latest educational material. The teachers attend at intervals to report progress and to receive instruction in recent developments of State education, a kind of refresher course that ensures village scholastic ideas do not stagnate.

The *Halk Evi* also perform another important function—that of watching the interests of the State. Its more active members in agricultural areas see that crops are not neglected or badly tended on land whose owners have received financial credits from the State. The scientific side of agriculture is being greatly developed, but that, of course, is hardly a matter for the local People's House, which sends problems of this kind to Ankara for solution and advice.

The actual cost of constructing the various schools is borne in different ways. It depends on the type of school the new structure is intended to house. The village erects its own little school at local charge. The buildings are generally simple—not much more than four walls and a roof—and constructed of a variety of materials. I saw corrugated iron ones, some very sensibly fashioned out of local stone, others of timber and sunbaked brick, and still more of concrete. They are nearly all of standardized shape, as the State has drawn up sets of simple plans, which any village intending to build its own school may have on loan free of charge. The primary schools—there are about ten thousand of them—are erected at the expense of the *vilayet*. The secondary schools and other educational institutions of higher grade are built by the State. Most of the schools are co-educational, with a few taking only boys or girls. Fees, if any, are assessed on parental ability to pay, and

this applies equally to those children living away from home as boarders.

The primary and secondary pupils wear simple school uniforms exactly as do their counterparts in Britain. Out of school activities are encouraged in every possible way. Almost every school has its own museum filled with specimens of local interest ranging from wild flowers and field weeds to butterflies and insects. Where there is a teacher of geology, the museum will contain specimens of the various rocks found in the district.

Each year the children of Turkey have their own special National Week. This begins on the 23rd April. Almost every possible activity in which a schoolboy or girl can partake is demonstrated in public, and adults are obliged to act as spectators only. It is the children's own week. At the end, however, parents are asked to comment freely on the progress or otherwise they consider the local schools have made since the previous year's festival.

In the new Turkey it is the young women and girls who have made a most spectacular entry into the professions, arts, and commerce. From being virtually ignored in the sense of serving the State or maintaining herself, the Turkish woman of to-day finds practically every occupation in the entire country open to her. There is no distinction whatever between men and women in Turkey to-day so far as eligibility for employment is concerned. Nearly twenty thousand girls are bank clerks; there are two thousand women doctors, more still in the various branches of the law, including legal assessors who sit with judges. Turkey has women police, and it has been claimed that the finest embroidery produced in the Near East comes from the pupils and

staff of the State Art College at Istanbul. Turkish women pilots fly civil aviation machines. There are two women announcers on the radio staff at Ankara, the senior having been sent from Turkey to graduate from the B.B.C. Staff College in London. Her young assistant—both have a fluent command of English, French, and German—was a former translator at the Mines Research Institute at Ankara. So far has the Turkish woman travelled since Kemal Atatürk's rise to power.

With the abolition in 1925 of the *fez*, which, as Kemal remarked, “sat on our heads as a sign of ignorance, of fanaticism, of hatred of progress and civilization,” and the introduction of the best of modern ideas from abroad, the young people of Turkey can now look forward to a future untrammelled by former prejudice, and limited only by their own capacity to make good use of the facilities which the State has placed at the disposal of all.

COTTON VENTING

By WINIFRED GRAHAM WILSON

A CHILDHOOD SPENT in South East Lancashire gave me three outstanding impressions of the Cotton Trade. Two of these served only to repel me, while the third pleased me and provided me with a rhythmic list of names which it still delights me to go over.

This was the list, how come by I do not remember, but copied into a little book with childish care and thoroughness.

Jaconets	Chadars
Mulls	Dhutis
Madapollams	Saris
Nainsooks	Tanjibs
Cambrics	Denims
Chintzes	Jeans

It was the sound of the names that pleased me ; I did not care in the least what each of them really meant.

A little while ago, intent at the moment not so much on the Cotton Trade *per se*, as on the early history of the East India Company, I was reading a book whose title might appear to spell nothing but boredom, *Commercial Relations between India and England (1601-1757)* by Bal Krishna. Yet it is one of the most fascinating books in the world. I turned to one of the appendices in search of what I wanted, when these words caught my eye :—

Alatches	Byrampauts
Allejars	Calicoes
Atchbannies	Callowapores
Bandannoes	Carradarries
Bejutapauts	Chelloes
Brawls	Chintzes

Twelve only out of a list of many equally attractive names, "Chintzes" forming the key word and carrying me back to my own childhood's list of years ago. These alatches, allejars and the rest were grouped together, I found, in 1720 as "Prohibited Piece-goods of India". For in 1720 things were in a bad way in England and an act, one of a series, was passed forbidding the importation into this country of cotton or other textile materials from India.

The act was never completely enforced, and in a little while it came to be disregarded, so that a good time began for Indian cotton manufacture which lasted through a long period.

There must scarcely be a person who could fail to connect cotton with India, scarcely a person who does not realize that cotton goods have been made there for a very long stretch of years. But few are aware how long the stretch is, so long that Greek historians could write of India's cotton plants and cotton materials as far back as the fifth century B.C. But even that does not go back far enough, for we have authentic evidence that cotton goods were made in India some thousand years or so earlier even than that. India must have had the monopoly of making cotton goods, as far as the Eastern Hemisphere was concerned, between about 1500 B.C. and A.D. 1500.

Travellers have told in their diaries of the beauty of some of India's cotton materials. Marco Polo, for instance, in the thirteenth century wrote of Mutfli on the Coromandel Coast: "You must know that in this kingdom the best and most beautiful and finest buckrams in the world are made—and the most costly too. For I assure you that they are like tissues of Rheims linen.

Indeed they are so beautiful the greatest Kings and Queens might wear them as something truly regal."

And later, writing of 1506 or so, Ludovico di Varthema told how Cambay supplied "all Persia, Tartary, Turkey, Syria, Barbary Arabia and Ethiopia with cotton stuffs", silk too for that matter. He, too, spoke of the excellency of India's cotton materials.

Another writer mentioned a length of thirty yards or so of muslin "so fine that you would scarcely know that you had it in your hand". This fineness of texture seems to have characterized many muslins. For those of Dacca which could be had either plain or interwoven with gold and silver were described as of the utmost delicacy. In fact some of the plain muslins were known as the "woven wind" and from them were made the softest of baby clothes in which the mothers of England delighted to clothe their infants in the seventeenth century. There are even now extant the baby clothes of Charles II and (ironically enough) of Oliver Cromwell too, made of this same Dacca muslin.

"Export or we die" was only a few months ago the heading of a newspaper column dealing with Lancashire's straits in her export trade. But "export or we die" must have been the fact if not the utterance of millions of Indians in the days when England's cotton trade began its upward course. Once the difficulties of spinning were got over, Englishmen rapidly improved their woven products, and machine-made goods by the thousands of yards were turned out of Lancashire's mills.

As far back as 1576 Hakluyt declared that "our chiefe desire is to find out ample vent of our wollen cloth. the naturall comoditie of this our Realm". To his

idea the fittest places for the purpose were the " manifold islands of Japan and the Northern parts of China and the regions of the Tartars next adjoining ". The capacity to make our own cotton piece-goods inevitably put an entirely new complexion on our affairs. It was now a necessity to " find out ample vent " for our cotton goods. What better place could be fixed upon than India ?

Thus it came to be that our machine-made goods gradually replaced the hand-woven products of India, with the consequent ruination of the Indian weavers. So eventually it was cotton goods rather than Hakluyt's woollen goods that took England round the world.

There was a time when following Hakluyt's suggestion, in the spirit though not in the letter, we vented our cotton piece-goods in Japan. We had preferential treatment for a long time as to tariffs ; our goods found their way with little difficulty into Japanese homes. Then Japan began to import raw cotton, for though she could grow it in the south of her country she could not grow nearly enough. She imported it from South China, from India, and from America. She learned how to manufacture it in so cheap and efficient a way that Upton Close said of her some five years ago : " To-day it is Japan's . . . manufacture of cotton goods that builds her trade empire and underwrites her political empire. Asian industrialism, like European, begins with cotton. This is true in China and India as well as Japan. Japan does not propose to let a still new rival outdo her, however, as she outdid England. Hence the bombing at Shanghai in 1932 of every Chinese cotton factory not under Japanese control." Hence too perhaps in large measure the bombing of the Chinese to-day.

But there, remains still the necessity for "venting" the manufactured material. So we find that Japanese goods began to flood the markets of India: that very India from whom we first got cotton goods and whose markets we ourselves subsequently flooded from the early years of the nineteenth century until the recent coming of Lancashire's own decline. Actually, as in their *Rise of Modern Industry* J. L. and Barbara Hammond so tellingly word it, "the raw product grown in America was brought to England, worked into finished cloths, sent to India and there sold in immense quantities though the raw product was also grown in India and the industry practised by Hindoos who had at once exquisite skill and the simplest wants in the world."

Hydro-electric power is the Japanese standby, for "much of her territory stands on end," thus providing her with rivers that rush rapidly into the sea. Coal was our standby, so too was it in parts of India until hydro-electric power was generated there. Side by side with her absorption of Japanese cotton goods Bombay and other Indian cotton centres were a few years ago galvanized into activity by both Indian and British firms. Now with her hydro-electric generators India is making cotton goods of a highly satisfactory type; so that soon, as far as certain areas at any rate are concerned, no foreign cotton goods of any kind will be required.

Japan can sell cotton materials in East Africa and South America. Take the latter: not only is there "vent" enough for her there for her cotton goods, but when necessity points the way there will be opportunity for buying Patagonian wool so that her

armies may be clothed. A new trade cycle will thus perhaps write itself in the history of world commerce.

It is only a short time ago since cotton was used in a barter deal between this country and the United States. The unease of America caused by Japan's attitude in the Pacific made her wish to increase some of her rubber stocks as a strategic reserve. Excess cotton could be used by Britain, and Britain could easily lay her hands on rubber supplies in Malay. What more simple than to turn back the clock of the world's trading methods and effect the exchange by barter?

Curiously enough the first trading transactions between Europe and America were of the nature of barter for cotton. Columbus, nearly four hundred and fifty years ago, found that the natives of the West Indies were adept at spinning yarn. In some few districts they had even discovered how to weave narrow cloth but this was more unusual. It was the yarn that Columbus and his party wanted, and they obtained large quantities of it in exchange for more or less worthless beads and other similar objects, the brightness of which drew the fancy of the American Indians.

The cottons of India were cultivated cottons. Those of the West Indies were probably to some extent cultivated too. But there were other American Indians using other cottons which must have been more or less of a wild type. These Indians lived in Arizona and Mexico, some of them as far south as Peru. They knew the spinning and weaving of cotton. They made bands and cloths and ropes not only for everyday requirements but also for their religious rites. In particular the Pueblo Indians brought their cotton manufacture to a high pitch. Dr. Fewkes of the Bureau of American Ethnology

has described some of the finds he made in the Red Rock country of the Rio Verde Valley of Arizona. They included a variety of materials but the most fascinating is surely this : " a reed in which was inserted a cotton fiber unlike anything yet reported from Cliff houses, and as the end of the cotton which projected beyond the Cavity of the reed was charred, it possibly was used as a slow-match or tinder box."

Few people realize that even to-day there are American Indians such as the Hopi still making their old-time cotton materials, the while all the various " Manchesters " of the world are feverishly turning out their thousands of yards of material intent not so much on the beauty or the method of its making as upon its being " vented " somewhere in some other corner of the world.

THE CHANGES OF FIFTY YEARS

(*Extracts from the diary of Georgiana Sitwell, 1824-1900*)

Edited by OSBERT SITWELL

(*Georgiana Sitwell—afterward Mrs. Campbell Swinton—was born in 1824 and died in 1900. She was the third daughter of Sir George (2nd Bart.) and Lady Sitwell. Lady Sitwell was an elder sister of Archbishop Tait. . . .*

These reminiscences dealing with childhood and youth, from 1830 to 1849, were written between 1880 and 1890. A previous selection appeared in No. 30, for February this year.)

MEN'S DRESS WAS not very different from what it is in the present day, except for the large white neckcloths, the white duck trousers worn in summer—the old Duke of Wellington, it is said, always put on his upon the first of May, whatever the weather—now and then a waistcoat of ruby velvet or some other bright colour, or perhaps of white watered-silk, with turquoise or jewelled buttons for evening attire. My father and Sir Frederick Stovin often wore ruby velvet waistcoats at night, and shepherds' plaids for shooting costumes, which, in honour of a visit to the Highlands by the Duke of Devonshire, were then called by his name. It was not considered the proper thing to wear a shooting jacket at breakfast, and I can remember Lord Wensleydale's sarcastic hits at my brother Fred, who had come down one morning thus prepared for the day's sport. Occasionally men wore scarlet waistcoats in the morning; and one of our young guests once appeared in a waistcoat embroidered all over with pink roses, but this was not considered good form. . . . Boys had Eton jackets as now, and my little brothers, as

mere children, were dressed in Gordon or Campbell tartan frocks, which, like the cloaks of the same material in which we little girls were garbed at one time, must have been hideous.

At Renishaw the hours of meals were rather later than at most other country houses. Breakfast from 1826-1846 was nominally at ten, but often did not begin until eleven o'clock. In the year last named, luncheon was at two and in 1834 dinner at half-past six, though in Derbyshire six o'clock seems to have been more usual.¹ An English breakfast comprised only tea and toast, with an egg for the elder people if they desired it. This was the usual custom : Lord and Lady Wensleydale had nothing but bread and butter, and when Lord Wensleydale was ordered meat by his doctor, bacon was brought for him and for no one else. But to those who, like my mother, were used to the profusion of a Scottish breakfast, toast was not enough, and something had to be added. In 1826, as a friend remembered, mutton cutlets were served at Renishaw every morning, my parents not yet having realized that, since a sheep has only one neck, three had to be killed each week in order to provide them. In 1840, the meal had become more substantial, there being large pieces of brawn, ham, cold meat and game, as well as quantities of jam upon the table and sideboard.

In the schoolroom newspaper, called the *Renishaw Comet*, which I and my sisters amused ourselves by editing, some male contributor of 1846 makes a good deal of fun about the eight meals a day that he accuses

¹ In February, 1834, when a solicitor had to come over on business and was asked to dine, he presumes the hour to be six unless he hears to the contrary.—(Editor's note.)

the Miss Sitwells of consuming. First thing in the morning a cup of tea was taken in bed ; at ten o'clock the young ladies breakfasted ; at twelve o'clock they refreshed themselves with fruit and cake ; at two o'clock they lunched on soup, meat and tart, with sherry and hot water ; at five o'clock they sipped tea and swallowed buttered buns with the appetite of a New Zealand chief for missionary ; dinner followed in all its courses, and at midnight a fragrant odour stole through the passages ; a supper of devilled legs and wings of turkey was ending the day. The Miss Sitwells retaliated on their critics by remarks upon the shooting lunches, the cigars and the snuff with which the gentlemen regaled themselves.

There was no gathering for five o'clock afternoon tea in those days, but most ladies took an hour's rest in their rooms before the six or seven o'clock dinner, retiring thither with their books. Later, young ladies persuaded their maids to bring them surreptitious cups of tea from the housekeeper's room, a practice to which they dared not confess for fear of being well scolded by their elders. Married ladies did not conceal the luxurious habit, as many indulgences were allowed to them which would have been thought highly unnecessary for younger people. It was not till about 1849 or 1850, when I was about twenty-six or twenty-seven, that five o'clock tea in the drawing-room was made an institution, and then only in a few fashionable houses where the dinner hour was as late as half-past seven or eight o'clock. My mother was the first to introduce the custom into Scotland ; and this was in consequence of Lord Alexander Russell, who was staying with us at Balmoral, telling her that his mother, the Duchess of

Bedford, always had afternoon tea at Woburn.¹ The story of the north country clergyman who, visiting the Bishop at Fulham and being shown to his room, retired to bed, and when disturbed from his slumbers an hour or two later by the footman bringing hot water, and the roaring of the gong, imagined the next morning's breakfast to be at hand, was probably perfectly true.

In those days children had few luxuries. It was considered only the usual thing that our nursery and schoolroom should be lighted by tallow candles, though our father's income must have been £12,000 a year. Many of our cousins, when still small, envied us the meat we ate daily at dinner, for it only fell to their lot—according to their bill of fare—to have it three or four times a week. As children we were rather delicate, and better cared for than most, but meat at supper or at breakfast was unheard of, even with us, and until long after I left the schoolroom, no young lady ever thought of it at breakfast.

When I recall our young days, the extreme ignorance of the world that characterized all our ideas makes me smile. We read a good deal of poetry, of Tennyson, Wordsworth, Byron, Gray, and Shelley, and parodied some of their poems in our schoolroom newspaper. But, like other young people of our position, whose home was in the country, we lived so simply, read so few novels, heard so little gossip or discussions of other people's affairs, that we lived in an ideal world

¹ Fanny Kemble, in her *Later Records*, described how, at Belvoir Castle in 1842, she was invited to the room of the Duchess of Bedford, and found her with a "small and select" circle of female guests, busily employed in brewing and drinking tea, with Her Grace's private tea-kettle. This she thinks was the beginning of five o'clock tea. At first men seem to have been excluded.—(Editor's note.)

and could not see life as it really was. Though there were no scandal-mongering journals such as exist to-day, newspapers were not considered quite suitable for young ladies, and only the political and historical articles in them were read to us. We were unsophisticated to a degree which would not be possible now. I have often thought what fools we were, or rather what fools we should have appeared to the practical, unromantic girl of the present day.

If it had not been so, how would my sister Mary have continued to imagine (and the illusion lasted with her for years, though probably with him for not so long) that she could marry the fascinating Frederick Byron, who had but a hundred pounds a year, and whose health was too delicate for the prosecution of the legal studies he had undertaken with the view of being called to the Bar? How could I have ever dreamed, as I did till I was past twenty years of age, that the perfection of matrimonial bliss would be to wed some penniless cornet in a Hussar regiment, my ideas of strict economical management being limited to driving about with the said cornet in a phaeton and pair, instead of a phaeton and four? Or how could my sister Alice have expected that her active, restless lover would be content, as he professed that he would be, with a life passed in entire seclusion with her and her children in a fern-embowered cottage in Wales? No! on these subjects girls have more knowledge to-day, and consequently should be less liable to disappointment.

One hears now many remarks on the subject of the drinking habits prevalent at the beginning of the nineteenth century. At Renishaw, however, I do not think there was hard drinking, even in my grandfather's

time. Certainly in my day I saw nothing of it. The only person I remember to have been drunk after dinner at Renishaw was a clergyman, a temporary curate, who when very young had fractured his skull by a fall out hunting, and was eccentric in many respects. One night he succumbed to the influence of the champagne provided for the entertainment of some officers from Sheffield, who afterward helped to carry him out of the drawing-room. We were terribly shocked.

My father was an exceedingly temperate man—probably, for his health's sake, he ought to have taken more wine—and so were my brothers. A glass of sherry at luncheon (no light claret was then to be procured), a glass occasionally at bedtime when we had guests in the house, and then very rarely, was the only wine he drank except at dinner. There was no smoking-room, so consequently no spirits at night. Soon after I grew up, a room was set apart for that purpose, but before that time there existed no such arrangement, either at Renishaw, Courteenhall, Ampthill, Garscube, or the other houses we were in the habit of visiting. Such smoking as existed, took place out of doors. When I was ten or eleven years old, I can remember one of my governesses inveighing against cigars as a horrible modern invention. Cigarettes were of course unknown.

It is commonly supposed that most masters of hounds of that epoch drank hard. Certainly, so far as my experience went, the contrary was the case. At Osberton, where we frequently met many sportsmen, I remarked that they drank very little wine at dinner, and came out of the dining-room almost immediately after the ladies. My mother told us that in Scotland the habit of sitting late over the wine survived much longer. I remember,

soon after my marriage, being surprised by a remark of my husband's aunt, old Miss Catherine Swinton. When the conversation turned upon fox-hunting, she seemed to think the word synonymous with dram-drinking; and perhaps in her experience it had been so. Probably the custom of taking much wine lingered later in the extreme north of England, for I recollect being told, about the year 1842, by the sister of a young Derbyshire lady who had married a Northumbrian squire, of one house near the Scottish border where the gentlemen never appeared in the drawing-room after dinner. I imagine, however, that this must have been an isolated case.

My father and mother did not approve of card-playing, and our chief amusements after dinner were still charades and music, with society games such as "Proverbs" and stringing a set of words, taken at random, into a story. The servants and village people used sometimes to play cricket in the Kennel fields, and Reresby, who could hit pretty hard, occasionally joined them. Before croquet was introduced, no game existed but battledore and shuttlecock, and a game called "*la grasse*", played by two persons who threw and caught a small hoop upon two wands, one of which was held in each hand.

I was asked recently what newspapers I remembered in my youth. . . . My father always took in the *Sun*—a London paper, I suppose, and Conservative; the *Morning Post*; a weekly review called *The Examiner*; and a paper called the *Derbyshire Courier*. We also subscribed to the *Chesterfield Gazette*, edited by Captain Roberts, R.N. I recollect my father coming into the library one day and saying: "*Here is the new penny paper; all this for one penny.*" It was the *Penny*

Magazine, then recently suggested or edited by Lord Brougham, and consisted of some four or six pages, the size of an ordinary blotting-book. My father used to read it to us at night. The matter was often composed of natural history, of which study he was very fond, and of science, travels, and inventions.

The appearance of Dickens' novels was an era in our lives, and they excited the utmost enthusiasm among the young people. The first came out in monthly numbers, and appeared when I was about sixteen; and I can remember that the elders shook their heads and said that the slipshod, familiar style of the new production would lower and vulgarize the taste of the rising generation, who would no longer read well-written, but less exciting, works of fiction. (The novels of Dickens were never so popular in Scotland; and I have met many Scotch people who could not see their humour or admire the simple pathos, which one would have expected everyone to be touched by. . . . The scenes and characters were too English.)

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Though shopmen and shopwomen were not called "young gentlemen" and "young ladies" in my childhood, I think that between people of different ranks, as for instance between masters and servants, there existed a much warmer feeling than you would readily find at the present day. Nor is it to be wondered at, when we remember that, unlike these restless times, superior and inferior had often spent their whole lives together. I remember my father¹ being quite out of

¹ One of the obituaries which appeared of Sir George Sitwell notes, as a matter for wonder, as well as a tribute to his equable nature, that only on two occasions in his life had he been known to strike a servant !—(Editor's note.)

spirits for long after the death of an old and faithful gamekeeper whom he had known from his boyhood. Sometimes the whole family were made quite unhappy by the death of servants, or by tales of accidents or illness in the village. No, I am confident that sympathy with the lower classes was as great, if not greater, than now; and it was certainly more sincere, being spontaneous and not expected. We thought it no harm to designate them dependants, and they felt no degradation in being called by that name which, in fact, belonged to the place they occupied in the social scale.

Once, when a poor cottager fell behindhand with his rent in consequence of misfortune, we children were advised to sell our little flock of pet lambs—they were really seven full-grown sheep—in order to pay it for him. Had he lived in these times of sentimental sympathy, it would have been thought the height of injustice that he should have been expected to pay his rent at all! On the other hand, certain things, due to long custom, undoubtedly gave an appearance of hardness to my young days. Thus at the time of the Assizes, a ball used to be given for the young lawyers and country gentry at the town where they were held, and was very largely attended. I had heard that it was sometimes celebrated in rooms above the gaol or county buildings, and within hearing of, if not actually over, the very cells where the prisoners condemned to death were lying: but, when I expressed my horror, I remember being very much laughed at by Lord Wensleydale for my absurd sentimentalism in thinking the Assizes a time unfit for dancing and gaiety.

(To be continued)

POETRY

ANY MAN TO ANY WOMAN

DARK ANGEL WHO art clear and straight
As cannon shining in the air,
Your blackness doth invade my mind
And thunderous as the armoured wind
That rained on Warsaw is your hair.

And so I love you till I die—
(Unfaithful I, the cannon's mate).
Forgive my love of such brief span,
But fickle is the flesh of man
And death's cold puts the passion out.

I'll woo you with a serenade—
The wolfish howls the starving made,
And lies shall be your canopy
To shield you from the freezing sky.

Yet when I clasp you in my arms
Who are my sleep, my zero hour
That clothes, instead of flesh, my heart,
You in my heaven have no part.
For you, my mirage broken in flower

Can never see what dead men know!
Then die with me and be my love;
The grave shall be your shady grove,
And in your pleasaunce rivers flow

(To ripen this new Paradise)
From a more universal Flood
Than Noah knew : but yours is blood.

Yet still you will imperfect be
That in my heart like death's chill grows,
—A rainbow shining in the night,
Born of my tears . . . your lips, the bright
Summer-old folly of the rose.

EDITH SITWELL

HOLIDAY IN LAKELAND WITH A FRIEND

SPEAK THE WORD, speak
that the ice break
and the chicken crack its egg.
The future, our bird
like a raven is stirred
and the past has a broken leg.

Broken shank, broken wing,
grey feather drifting down—
O the sky like a broken, rejected thing
splits on our winter, lights up the lake,
reveals the warm earth in her private renown.

Here and now at beginning of spring
when the earth is touched in its depths by unrest,
how can we tell our lives from the thing,
ourselves from the raven, our house from her nest ?

for we are but two. And nature is now
 an egg that is hatching, a mother-bird who
 is raising her wings in black warmth on her brood
 that crowd in that shadow to greet the strange world.

Say the word, speak ! that the anvil break
 at the crash of the hammer of God.
 One moment of friendship's an attack made of fire
 that gives the lie to our craven, desire.

Here in this cottage ringed round with black peaks
 that glitter with water the sun turns to silver,
 at England's North Pole, you and I know the secret
 that expels from Sargasso the humorous elver.
 For desire like a craven in russet, by raven
 is pecked back and back, by the black beak driven ;
 where and O where shall desire, the riven,
 find a bed, a pillow for head, a haven ?
 not in us, for each other ; for some other, much later :
 when the summer has opened and either by waiting
 discovers a difference, the scale of that loving.

The bird is enabled to soar by a chamber
 of air in her wingbone ; she floats.
action in life of a human's
 this chamber in wingbone, this flight of a bird,
 but through years, not a daytime : in spite of the
 negative.

" what courage is needed for this ? " Should I know ?
a man is his heart, and his bones, and his courage.

" What is love, then ? "

The same action,
 but by mutual attraction.

But desire is past us, we are past desire.
only this partnering in mid of cold nature
who is big so unwillingly with the heedless year's fire,
the pale Spring; only this creature

who moves in our bowels like a whale in cold sea,
in our hearts' great safety, like humorous elver,
ordains us partners, while raven flies over
the Lakeland our action, and what is to be.

PATRICK EVANS

SPRING PASTORAL

WINTER HAS FALLEN away, the frost on the nettle
falls now as dew, while the grass grows longer,
and the earliest blossom has broken,
and leaves move awkwardly under the stars.

Now fretful gusts blow tickets about the pavements,—
pauper's confetti, chiaroscuro for tramps,
trodden mosaics that change with the turncoat days,
a devil's kaleidoscope turned by the careless moon.

Old women give alms to idiots, government misers
offer gold drugs to the dying who ask for dark water,
water as cold as the wind on the mountains in winter—
these are no savers of life, no sorcerers.

Here no gods descend from chariot or daimler
to cuddle the dreaming housemaid, no goddesses
charm beggars' eyes or offer men delicate hands
to dance in cloud galleries on crystal floors,

but only the wind drags crocus and daffodil
through murdered gardens, and covers the mincing park
with meagre colours that glaze and glitter like sweets,
while nursemaids mumble along their asphalt track.

Ask me no more of eclogue or pastoral.
The poet fingers the breasts of official nymphs—
cold dryads that stand above dugout and shelter,
while newspaper readers take up the tale of Spring.

JOHN BAYLISS

S. O. S.

WILL NEVER YOUR searchlight eyes swerve down upon
this wreck
over four thousand miles of the bitter Atlantic's race,
where my struggling ribs collide with the huge night's
attack?

Will your radio arc of nerves not single out this voice,
this statement made with routine slang as if indoors,
precisely commenting the latitude of doom?

Heart's not insured to get a solid grave; it flares
out, lost with all hands, leaving just its monstrous name
as flotsam on the waters; and a half-mast flag.

When all the bulkheads of a purpose are stove in,
the desperate contract's ended; none will read the log
to teach him in the storm of worlds how best to drown.
O coffin ship a-glare with hunger lashed to the helm,
what ghost the black, deep, raging years will overwhelm?

EITHNE WILKINS

COURAGEOUS

A SILVER WIRE blossoms into blood
whose red globe drips, tenderly,
and sinks, like a stone, silently,
into the pond of my eye.

A tree-top in the dawn
sad as two spinsters
bears an eagle
whose flight draws from me
a spider's web, and at evening
covers it with dew.

Through the veil of night
I hear the moon's heart-beat
and explosions in the soft flesh
of a brother at sea.

A. C. SEWTER

PROSPECT

THE WHITE PALISADING round the night
softened into a grey snow
which rose and fell gently
with her breathing,
covering her, in the end
with a sweet eider-down of ice.

The dark pillars supporting the day
shuddered and then turned,
each revolving slowly like a worm-wheel
winding a red gulf outwards
into the night.

I stood on a rock from which I saw this plainly.

Then the spring in my veins
and the fresh earth at my feet,
the young leaves in my hands
and the flowers of my eyes
brought a new year.
birds sang in my hair,
rain glistened on the grass
and on my limbs.

A. C. SEWTER

CONFERENCE

A LOOM OF grey sand
spins lighthouses in the wind,
and flights of blue doves
encircle the lonely plough.
The royal spider in his web
entertains a constellation
of the dim stars of gloom,
and their planet-bards attend
with their spherical concave self-reflecting mirrors.

A. C. SEWTER

THE LITTLE JEWELLER

By H. E. BATES

§ I

MR. ELISHA PEACOCK woke suddenly at four o'clock in the morning, in the dead of darkness, feeling very ill. For some moments immediately before waking he was aware of a strange sound of tinkling glass, of his whole body fighting a violent constriction in his chest. When he woke at last it was some time before he realized that the sound was that of the night wind shaking the coloured glass chandelier above his head, that the conflict in his body was in reality a wire of pain boring down into his heart.

It was then that he realized he was very ill. In the moment of realization he suddenly heard too the striking of ten or a dozen clocks downstairs in the small jeweller's shop he had kept for thirty-five years. The sounds, not quite simultaneous, at first clear and then discordantly confused, rolled over and over his half-wakened mind in waves of metallic tumult. He managed at last to struggle up on one elbow. The pain, as if a hot gimlet were being turned slowly down into his chest, had now slightly lessened. The clocks had ceased. In the night silence he could hear no sound except the small renewed clash of the glass hangings above his head, and there was only one thought in his mind. It was the strange, painful thought that he, Elisha Peacock, after sixty-eight years of tranquil living, had reached the point where he must die in the night, alone, frightened like a child by the silence and the darkness, before anyone could reach him or he could get downstairs to the telephone.

With this thought in his mind he managed to get slowly out of bed and put his feet into his slippers. The pain in his heart had now ceased to have direction or motion, and lay there only like a dull embedded bullet. He felt that he wanted to press it away and so held both hands locked across his chest, staggering a little as he walked. He felt very weak as he walked downstairs, slowly, not troubling to put on the lights, feeling his way by the cold walls of the staircase, and he was troubled by a remote but fierce idea that he did not want to die. By the time he reached the passage which led from the stairs to the glass door of the shop this thought had replaced all others: had become not merely a wish but a determination. He at last put on the lights of the shop, where the telephone was, and then stood still: a small, grey, perplexed figure, his pain-washed eyes blinking in the white reflected light that sprang at him from the cabinets and shelves of glass and silver with which the shop was full.

For one moment he looked at the telephone, thought better of it, and then went into the room behind the shop, switching on the light. By the fireplace, in which the fire was quite dead, there was a cupboard. He stood with his hand on the brass knob of it, intending to get himself a glass of brandy. But for a long time he could not move. The upward motion of his arm had brought on the pain in his heart again. Suddenly he shut his eyes and felt that he was falling.

It was some moments later that he came to himself, knowing that he must have fainted. He pulled himself up to the cupboard and found the bottle of brandy and a glass. He poured out a little brandy and drank it. It smoothed away the harsh edges of his weakness and

pain and for a second or two he looked vaguely about him, slowly coming back to his senses before going back upstairs, still carrying the bottle and the glass, still stupefied, so that he forgot to switch off the lights.

From that moment until eight o'clock he lay in bed, thinking. The pain in his heart had ceased; in its place remained a huge, accumulative fear. He felt that he had been down to the edge of life, had looked over into a vast space of unknown darkness, and had only just managed to come back. This fear was sometimes so strong that he held himself immobile, not daring to move. He lay looking at the grey winter morning light distribute itself reluctantly on the tiny pieces of rose and emerald glass of the chandelier, which still shook and tinkled in the moving air. After sixty-eight years something almost catastrophic had happened to him, and now fear of its recurrence drove his thoughts back into the past. He recalled his life in the shop. He was not married. Outside, in permanent gilt lettering, he had had put up a quarter of a century ago a large notice : Peacock for Presents : Pence to Pounds, and on this simple motto he had built up a secure, comfortable business. He had tried during all that time not to harm anyone ; he felt he could recall honestly that he had never cheated a single person out of a single penny. He was not afraid of the opinion of any man. He had tried to be decent, upright, considerate, and he felt that perhaps he had succeeded. No, he was not afraid of that.

It was only the conscious realization of his fear of death that disturbed him. He knew suddenly, as he lay looking at the pieces of glass quivering above his head

in the increasing light, that he had been afraid of it for years. The desire never to give pain to others had made him sensitive to the thought of any pain to himself. In one sense it had made him an ultra-careful man—he remembered how in the days of gas-lighting he would never go to bed without turning off the main for fear of being blown up or asphyxiated in the night—in another, quite careless. What had happened that morning had brought to his mind another result of his fear. Somehow he had shrunk from making a will.

But now he would rectify that. Yes, now he must see to it. When Edward came at eight o'clock he would explain what had happened; they would call in a solicitor. Edward would understand; you could talk to Edward. Edward was his assistant: a thoughtful, conscientious young man remarkable for resource and promptitude. He was not only a shop-assistant, but he came in every morning an hour earlier than opening time in order to cook breakfast. When he thought of Edward, the little jeweller felt his mind strengthened and tranquillized.

At eight o'clock the clocks downstairs began striking the hour and they had no sooner finished than he heard the sound of Edward unlocking and opening the back door. He lay still for a few moments, listening, and then called.

"Edward!" he called. "Edward!"

He was surprised at the weakness of his own voice. It dissolved against the walls of the room, unheard. He tried to raise himself slightly on his elbow, but it seemed as if his body were made of wax that dissolved too under its own slight motion. He could only lie back on the pillows, weakly repeating Edward's name.

A few moments later he heard the young man mounting the stairs ; then his voice :

“ Mr. Peacock ! Are you there, Mr. Peacock ? Was that you calling ? Mr. Peacock ! ”

“ In here, Edward,” was all he could say, “ in here.”

Edward came hurriedly into the bedroom, a bespectacled young man with brown, alarmed eyes.

“ Oh ! there you are, Mr. Peacock. All the lights were on downstairs, Mr. Peacock, and I couldn’t make it out. Whatever’s the matter ? ”

“ Nasty turn, Edward,” he said. “ In the night. About four o’clock.” He tried to smile. “ An awful pain in my heart, Edward. Nasty.” He tried again to struggle up in bed.

“ I wouldn’t try to get up if I were you, Mr. Peacock,” Edward said.

“ No good lying here, Edward.”

“ That’s all very well, Mr. Peacock,” Edward said, “ but if you’re not well I ought to ring up the doctor. Shall I ? ”

“ I don’t know, Edward. I don’t know what to say. I’ve never been like this before, Edward. I don’t know—”

He tried again to get up. For the second time his body melted like wax on the pillows. He shut his eyes for a moment, weak and tired, and when he opened them again Edward had gone out of the room, and he called after him :

“ Edward ! Edward ! ”

It was only after he had called six or seven times that he realized once more how weak his voice was, that it had no more strength than the gentle, insistent sound of the chandelier trembling above his head, that

it was now very like the voice of a child, crying in trouble and getting no answer.

§ II

He lay in the bedroom all that day, irritated and tired, yet restless. Frequently he found himself troubled by the motions and the sound of the chandelier. It was a very strange thing that he had never noticed it before. Yet now it troubled him. Once or twice he settled back on the pillows, trying to sleep, but the tinkling of the little pieces of glass, stirring in the wind blowing in at the open window, made a tiny maddening curtain between himself and oblivion. At other times he lay thinking: about the shop, then Edward, about the chrysanthemums in his little greenhouse behind the shop, about the doctor. When the doctor had been and departed he turned over in his mind what he had said. He tried to read into his reticent words at first more and then less than they seemed to mean. "The heart has had a nasty bump, Mr. Peacock, that's the trouble. A nasty little bump. It needs rest and quiet, that's all, Mr. Peacock. If I were you I should get someone in to look after you." In time these words began to have on him the same effect of irritation as the sound of the chandelier. They told him nothing. Very clever to say the heart had had a nasty bump; wonderful to advise getting someone in. The trouble was that he had nobody: except a sister who lived at the far end of the town, married to a third-rate insurance agent who rolled his own miserable ragged cigarettes for the sake of economy. He did not like either his

sister or her husband ; he did not think they liked him. It annoyed him that he should be forced even to think of them now.

He was glad when, about twelve o'clock, Edward came upstairs to say that his solicitor had arrived. Yet once again his feelings instantly took the form of fresh irritation.

"All right, all right, all right !" he said. "Show him up ! What's the sense in tramping upstairs twenty times when once will do ?"

"Yes, Mr. Peacock, yes." Edward hurriedly left the room.

"Wasting shoe leather !"

He lay back on the pillows, ashamed. His heart was beating very rapidly. He had not intended to speak like that. Far from it. No. He did not know at all what was coming over him. A few minutes later his solicitor came in, a tall narrow-jawed man who enjoyed a little shooting two or three days a week and who now entered the room with great heartiness, smiling. Suddenly the little jeweller, who had lived for so many years without contention or malice, felt that he hated him. He felt illogically that the solicitor and the idea of the will were the causes and not the result of his pain. His mouth set itself coldly against the bed-sheet, his eyes levelly transfixed.

"Sorry to see you like this, Mr. Peacock. Awfully sorry. Understand you wanted to see me ?"

"No !" the little jeweller said. "No !"

"Well, Mr. Peacock—"

"I don't want to see you ! I don't want to see anybody !"

"All right, Mr. Peacock, all right, all right. As you

like, Mr. Peacock. As you like. Perhaps I might come in again to-morrow ? ”

“ No ! ” the little jeweller shouted. “ No ! ”

For some moments after the solicitor had gone he was still shouting in a voice that was foreign to him. When he had finished he was again ashamed. He lay silent, his hands pressing his nightshirt against his heart. Closing his eyes, he tried to search for the causes of his strange behaviour. He then discovered that he was lonely. He felt suddenly a great need for companionship, for some objective event or circumstance that would make him forget his fear.

Lying there, he recalled the chrysanthemums in his little greenhouse behind the shop, and it seemed to him that he had found a solution. He felt a great hunger for the sight of the flowers. He called Edward, and then when Edward came upstairs he began to explain what he wanted : how Edward was to go downstairs to the greenhouse and cut the chrysanthemums. The young man stood listening reticently, with an expression of grave concern, asking at last how many chrysanthemums he was to bring ? Something about the young man’s earnest gravity suddenly seemed very funny to the little jeweller and he began laughing.

“ Cut them all,” he said. “ Cut them all, Edward. Bring them up here so that I can look at them. All of them, Edward, all of them ! Go on ! Go on ! ”

“ You don’t mean it, Mr. Peacock ? ”

“ Bless me, mean it ? Of course I mean it. Why should I say it if I didn’t mean it ? ”

“ What shall I do for vases, Mr. Peacock ? ”

The jeweller suddenly began laughing again, telling the young man that he was to get the vases out of

the shop. The assistant looked very troubled but said, "Yes, Mr. Peacock" and left the room. Ten minutes later he began to bring up the first of the flowers, great stalks of bronze and yellow and amber and pink, which he held at arm's length, like torches. He laid them first on the bed, where the little jeweller could reach out and touch them with the tips of his fingers, and then began to arrange them in bowls and vases brought up from the living-room and the shop. The jeweller watched him with bright, alert eyes, the chandelier and the solicitor and the pain in his heart momentarily forgotten. It seemed to him now that the room was alight. For the first time that day he lay untroubled by fear. He let the lids of his eyes relax and from his prostrate position on the bed he watched the great curled chrysanthemums swim about the room like constellations that brightened and soothed his mind. He asked at last how many flowers there were. The young assistant said he did not know, and the jeweller said, "Count them, Edward, there must be fifty or sixty."

"Yes, Mr. Peacock," the young man said and began to move his hands, counting the flowers, turning his head at last to say, "Sixty, Mr. Peacock. Exactly sixty. Funny how you guessed."

"Guessed?" The little jeweller began laughing in a strange way again. "No, Edward, no. I counted them! Counted them." He laughed at the young man's grave disturbed face. "Caught you that time, Edward, eh? Caught you?"

"Yes, Mr. Peacock," Edward said.

"Caught you nicely, eh, Edward?" He continued for some moments to laugh with bright eyes. He

ceased only to turn again to the young man and speak.

"Like having sixty moons shining in the room together," he said. "Eh, Edward, eh?"

§ III

Later that afternoon he fell asleep, awaking with fear in his heart about half-past three, momentarily disturbed by the November twilight and the sound of the chandelier. Earlier, before sleeping, he had been along to the bathroom. The catch of the bedroom door had not fastened properly, and the door now stood partially open. In this way he could hear voices. He lay listening intently for some moments, and then it came to him that they were the voices of his sister and her husband, talking to Edward at the foot of the stairs.

For some time he could not hear what they were saying. He caught only the tone of their voices. They seemed almost to be arguing. He heard Edward make a sudden exclamation, as if in protest. He heard the aggressively pitched note of his sister's voice, surprised, resentful, dominating Edward. He did not know why he concluded that his brother-in-law was there: except perhaps because he was completely silent.

Soon the voices came nearer. He heard the sound of feet on the stairs, and caught a sentence of his sister's: "Well, then, I think we'll go up and see what just is the matter."

He lay gripping his hands under the sheet. He did not know why he should feel suddenly so antagonistic towards his sister, towards everyone. He had never liked his sister, but his attitude had been one of remote

indifference. But now pain had ripped away the neat edge of his nerves, and he was angry because his sister had somehow been able to discover that he was ill.

He had withdrawn himself almost entirely under the sheets by the time his sister, preceding Edward and her husband, came into the room : a small, juiceless, volatile woman, with crinkled skin, her hands grasping a large patent leather handbag.

"Well?" she said. "Well! What have you been doing to yourself?"

He muttered sounds of denial and protest that had on her the effect of a challenge.

"Well, of course, if you're going to be like that after we've traipsed all the way up from North End!"

"Like what?" he murmured. "Like what?"

"Jumping down folks' throats! Muttering!" she said. "Muttering!"

He did not say anything. The slight exertion of protest had made him feel once again old and tired. In a moment the tranquillizing effect of sleep and flowers had been lost. He turned with slight weariness in the bed.

At that moment he saw that his sister had seen the flowers. Her eyes were behaving like lights of warning in their wrinkled sockets. Her mouth, falling open, revealed a colourless dark gap between the plate of her false teeth and the roof of her mouth; but a single word of speech was enough to bring the plate into place again with a click of acid astonishment.

"Well!" she said. "I wonder what next, I wonder what next!"

The little jeweller clenched his hands even harder

under the sheets. As he did so his brother-in-law spoke for the first time.

"Been bringing the greenhouse indoors, eh?" He spoke with false robustness, as if trying to be funny. His words became as it were knotted in his moustache, which his habit of smoking loose cheap cigarettes had turned a gingery yellow.

"And what if I have?" the little jeweller said. "What if I have? What exactly is it to do with you?"

"Mr. Peacock," Edward said. "Mr. Peacock. The doctor said you were on no account to get excited."

"Excited?" the woman said. "Excited. It looks as if that's the trouble. Over-excitement about something. Bringing a greenhouse-full of flowers into the house."

"Can't I do what I like with them?" he said, trying to raise his voice. "They're my flowers! Without you interfering."

"Mr. Peacock," Edward began.

"Be quiet, Edward!" he said. "Get downstairs! Get down to the shop. What do you suppose customers will be doing? Get down to the shop!"

As the young assistant went reluctantly out of the room the little jeweller's sister began speaking again, in protest, but he suddenly cut her off with an attack of angry words, at the same time throwing up his hands and bringing them down on the sheets.

"And you get out too! Both of you. Before I lose my temper. How can I get rest if you come up here arguing? How can I? How can I?"

"All right!" his sister said. "All right! But it looks to me as if you want someone to look after you!"

"I don't want anything except a little peace and quiet!" he shouted. "Get out!"

Rather hurriedly his brother-in-law went out of the room, his sister following, her lips strangely set. Suddenly he shouted after them that they could leave the door open. He wanted a little fresh air in there, a little fresh air !

The door was left slightly open. Exhausted, astonished at himself, feeling slightly ashamed, he lay back on the pillows. It took him some moments to get his breath. Then in the silence he lay listening, hearing again the voices from downstairs.

It was only after three or four minutes, after his anger had really passed and had become in recollection something foreign and meaningless to him, that he got out of bed, put on his slippers, and went to his bedroom door. As he opened it, he took his grey woollen dressing-gown off the door-peg and slipped it over his shoulders. Then he went slowly along the landing. The voices had already become clearer, yet not distinct. It was already late in the afternoon and as he went cautiously down the first few steps of the stairs he could see the chinks of electric light splintering sharply the darkness between stairs and shop. Half-way down the stairs he sat down, looking very small, slightly perplexed with his head to one side, and very solitary. He could hear the voices quite clearly now.

They came from the living-room ; mainly the voices of his sister, catechizing, and of Edward, answering. His sister seemed to be immensely concerned about the flowers.

"Didn't it strike you as very funny," she was saying to Edward, "that he should ask you to cut *all* the flowers ?"

"Well, it did rather. Yes."

"Fifty of them if there's one," she said.

"There's just sixty," Edward said. "Mr. Peacock counted them. He said it was like having sixty moons shining together in the bedroom."

"What?" she said. "*What?*"

The little jeweller heard Edward repeat what he had said.

"Well!" she said. "Well! Well, that settles it, that settles it. I'm stopping here until things are straightened out a bit. First he acts funny with the solicitor, then with us. Then he talks about seeing moons shining in the room. I think it's a good job we found out about it when we did."

The jeweller made his way slowly back upstairs while she was still speaking, catching now and then some more strident passage in what she was saying. In the bedroom the colour of the many flowers had died, but the room was full of a strong odour of chrysanthemums that hung pleasantly on the damp November air. Tired now, he lay down in bed. As he began to try to think, turning over in his mind what he had just heard, the chandelier stirred and began to drop down on him its small tinkling irritant bits of sound. It was this repetitive maddening sound, he thought suddenly, that throughout the day had goaded him into brief fits of anger. Why was it? He did not want to be angry. He felt recurrently ashamed of himself, miserable. Yet underneath the shame he was aware of a strange, dormant anxiety. It seemed to him that unless he took a terribly firm hold on himself he must sooner or later leap up in bed and seize the chandelier and smash it to pieces.

He was struggling with the perplexity brought about

by this desire when his sister came upstairs and into the darkening room. Though he did not see it, she had taken off her hat and coat. It was in explanation of this that she addressed him in a challenging voice :

“ Well, I’ve decided to stay for a night or two and look after you, Elisha, whether you like it or not. I’ve sent Fred home for the things. I hope you hear what I say ? ”

He did not answer. In a momentary flash of cunning he decided to lie still and silent, in a pretence of sleep.

§ IV

When he woke again it was late in the evening ; the room was dark and still, and he was no longer tired. He did not know what time it was, but soon he caught from the street outside the broken echoes of passing voices and traffic and then, raising himself on his elbow, he looked out of the uncurtained window and saw lights in the street below. He felt briefly reassured, and then turned to look at the bedroom. He could see better now, and suddenly he realized that something strange had happened.

The flowers had gone. He sat up in bed and switched on the light. An accidental breath of wind stirred the hanging glasses of the chandelier, and in this moment he felt all the violence of the day’s anger renew itself with tremendous strength. It was beyond mere irritation now. It no longer sprang from within him. It was an external force which seemed to take hold of him bodily and jerk him out of bed.

For a few moments he stood in the centre of the room, in his nightshirt, staring before him. Yes : the

flowers had gone. They had gone and he knew that only one person could have taken them away. His anger at these simple facts beat him into violent movement. He put out the light and began to dress. Anger directed his hands to things he did not consciously know were there: trousers, coat, a loose black beret which he often wore in the shop, his boots, which he did not lace up. It seemed to take hold of him and lead him downstairs: the same immense external anger aroused simply by the fact that his flowers had gone. Outside on the landing he almost stumbled over the vases of flowers lined up against the railings of the stairs, but his anger did not cease. It drove him from the stairs into the passage that ran between stairs and living-room, shining through the glass door of which he could see a light.

This light made him stop. Through the lighted glass door he could see his sister and her husband. They had taken possession. They were having supper at a table directly under the electric light. Beating straight down, the light threw their faces into shadow, depressing them. Bottles of stout stood on the table. He saw his sister, mouth full, reach out her hand and grasp the glass of stout and drink rapidly, her face excited by food and drink and some expounded intention he could not hear.

He turned away and went back along the passage. He unlocked the side-door at the foot of the stairs and went out into the street. It seemed again as if anger had driven him there. The night air was not cold, and he was still not tired. He began to walk rapidly, knowing in a strange way that he was not fully responsible for his movements.

But soon, as he walked along the street, his anger

underwent a change. It became an idea. It was the idea that his sister and her husband had installed themselves at the house for the sole purpose of taking away his money. He moved under the street-lights with an oblivious swaying movement, looking at the ground. From the nucleus of his single idea sprang others. He began to walk more quickly, impelled by the idea of escape. He became aware of the idea that he was being persecuted. They had taken away his flowers, they had come to take away his money. In time, if he did not escape, they would take away him.

He struggled along to the next corner, and then he had another idea. Out of the darkness there came a taxi, driven slowly, going home perhaps after meeting the last important train at the station. He put up his hand and shouted. The taxi pulled up and he told the driver to go straight to Mr. Archibald Foster's house, 45 Edward Street.

"What street?" the driver said.

"Edward Street."

"Edward Street?" the driver said. "Never heard of it. Edward Street?"

The little jeweller stood slightly swaying by the side of the taxi, trying to think. Edward Street? No, that was not right. It couldn't be right. He was thinking of Edward. It occurred to him suddenly that he needed Edward. What street did Edward live in? Foster Street? Archibald Street? He ran his hand vaguely across his face. No, he thought, no, what was he thinking about? Archibald was the name of his solicitor, who lived in Foster Street. It was his solicitor he needed, Mr. Archibald. He needed to make his will. Then he remembered that Mr. Archibald was dead, that the firm

was carried on by somebody of another name. Mr. Foster? No: he recalled abruptly that Foster was his sister's married name. He stood swaying on his feet, his mind, for the space of several seconds, quite blank. Where did he want to go? What was he trying to remember?

The voice of the taxi-driver aroused him at last. "Thought of it yet?"

"No," the little jeweller said, "I haven't thought of it." He now felt suddenly weak and cold from standing. "Let me get in. You can drive on and I'll tell you when I remember. I shall remember it in a minute."

What was it? he thought. What was it? As he lay back on the cushions of the taxi he tried desperately to beat his mind into a coherent effort of memory. What in God's name was it? He shut his eyes, pressing his hands against his forehead. The taxi swung from side to side, turning a corner, swinging him as if he were suspended by a rope. He knew again that he was very ill. His mind had ceased in its reactions. The knowledge of his illness was part of the darkness, the street lights swinging giddily past, the strange droning noise of the taxi boring with infinite melancholy down into his brain. Once the driver turned and spoke to him, but he did not reply. He was seized by the idea that he was being forcibly carried away into the darkness of a strange place. He had long since ceased his effort of memory. He felt now that he was fighting to escape. He felt very frightened by the dark confinement of the taxi and suddenly began to shout like a child.

"Let me get out!" he shouted. "Let me get out!" He wiped his hand across his face and found his forehead cold with the sweat of great anguish. "Let me out!"

Stop it ! Stop it ! Stop it ! Stop it !” he shouted.
“ Please stop it now ! ”

§ V

When he came to himself again he did not recognize his own skinny white hands lying on the dark grey blanket of the bed. In the same way, when he lifted one of his hands and drew it unsteadily across his face, he could not recall who he was. The strange details of the face, a growth of beard, the fleshless cheek-bones, the deep-sunken eyes, might have been those of some other person. He knew that the bed too was strange. He fixed in his mind the reality of its black iron shape, the grey blanket, the grey light falling on it from a distant window. Then he realized that it was one of many others.

Where was he ? His eyes cast themselves with slow weariness from side to side. They alighted and dwelt upon a double row of grey beds. In these beds, all exactly resembling his own, other men were lying, one or two asleep. He tried to understand his relationship to them. He looked at the walls of the room, the ceiling. The whitewash had begun in places to peel away. He considered again the grey winter light falling through the high narrow windows, trying to determine what time of day it was.

Gradually his mind began to clear. Wakefulness itself had broken a tiny hole of light in his troubled consciousness. It now began to widen, and as the distribution of light quickened he gripped his hands tightly on the blanket, remembering. Fixing his eyes on the ceiling he remembered the chandelier, his

bedroom, the flowers, his sister. But between these things and the present moment he was aware of a great blank. Then slowly he realized that this blankness was the key to where he was.

He looked again at the faces of the men about him. Some were staring at the ceiling, some straight before them, out of the windows ; a few were asleep. With an abrupt calmness of pity he saw them as the faces of men not responsible for themselves : the faces of the partially insane. For a moment or two this realization did not trouble him. He saw calmly, with detachment, that it did not affect him. He himself was not one of those silent staring creatures ; he had no part in their strange immobility. He understood and was sorry for them, his heart no longer calm but crying unspeakably with pity.

Suddenly it was as if he had stepped on a revolving trap. He seemed to take a step forward and was flung violently out of calmness into a pit of terror. He had a sensation of being hit on the head. He struggled to save himself, and all at once was completely calm again. This new calmness remained for a moment unbroken. Then it was shattered by his own voice, shouting at him in his own brain. "You are one of them !" it shouted at him. "You are one of them ! You are ! *You are !* "

As the voice died, he lay very still. A voice calling in his mind ? In answer he felt fear slowly begin to creep back to him : not merely his former shadowy fear of death, but the very cold, terrible fear of truth.

He lay for a long time trying to reason things out. He found memory very difficult, but finally he had an idea. As it came to him he looked slowly round the

room. The figures of the men, staring and wooden, had not moved. Cautiously he moved his legs under the blanket, bending his knees. At either end of the room were double glass doors, beyond which he could see a corridor. He watched this corridor during some moments for a sign of life, but nothing happened. He was thinking with peculiar clearness now.

Suddenly he leapt out of bed, flung himself bodily at the swing doors at the nearer end of the room, and rushed down the corridor. He heard behind him an abrupt murmur of voices, which the closing of the swing doors cut off again. For a short space he was alone in the corridor, running along the grey stone floors in his bare feet. Then he heard other feet running behind him. They were feet with heavy boots on them. They ran fast, catching up with him. He turned to look, involuntarily holding up his hands. The feet with boots belonged to a man in a brown uniform. The man rushed at him and locked his arms behind his back. The little jeweller began to struggle. He felt himself possessed suddenly by a colossal strength. He began shouting. The attendant put one of his hands over his mouth, bruising his lips. The little jeweller swung one arm free and then the attendant began to hit him, striking him again on the face and the body. He continued to fight violently and the attendant continued to hit him, until at last he gave up the struggle.

"Come on," the attendant said. "Back you go. They all try this trick once, but you'll learn better. Come on. Back again."

It was almost two hours later when he opened his eyes to see two figures, a doctor and a nurse, standing over him.

"Where am I?" he said. "Where is this?"

The doctor did not answer the question. "You're all right now?" he said. "Better?"

"I want to go home please."

"In time."

"I want to know who brought me here? Please who brought me here? A lady?"

"Your sister."

"I want to see my doctor," he said. "My own doctor. You know him—Doctor—Doctor—" he tried to make a great effort of memory, "Doctor—"

"It's all right. I'm your doctor."

"I want Edward," he said. He suddenly felt an intense revulsion of feeling against his sister. "Why did she do this?" he said, raising his voice. "Why did she do it? She'd no right! I never did anyone any harm! I never did anything." He clenched his hands. "Damn her! Damn her!"

"Please," the doctor said.

"She wants my money!" he shouted. "Damn her!"

"Listen," the doctor said. "Quietly. Your sister is paying to keep you here. She is struggling to pay as best she can. Don't misjudge her. How can she have your money if it's safe in the bank?" The doctor spoke with heavy kindness, as if in reality the little jeweller had no money and was under an immense delusion. "Now how can she?"

"She gets it if I die!" he said. "There's no one else. She gets it if I die!"

"I know," the doctor said. "But you're not going to die." He held clean light fingers on the little jeweller's pulse. "You've been getting excited. You mustn't do

that. If you want us to help you, you must help us. Couldn't you manage some sleep again?"

"I want to go home," the little jeweller said. "Please, I want to go home."

The doctor walked away, passing like a white ghost out of the swing doors. Seeing him go, the little jeweller lay back on his pillows, determined for one moment to be quite calm. The nurse remained about his bed, tucking in his blankets. He looked at her face, quite young, alive and soft, and it seemed to him suddenly the most human thing he had seen since waking in the grey, impersonal room.

"Nurse," he said. He held himself rigid under the blankets, more than ever determined to be quite calm.

"Yes," she said, "yes?"

"Nurse," he said, "Nurse." He was speaking with great earnestness, in a whisper, unaware that his eyes were glancing rapidly to and fro about the room, for fear of listeners. "Nurse, I've got money," he said. "Plenty of money. Two or three thousand. See? Plenty." He spoke in a whisper of desperation. "If you'll help me get away I'll see that you get something. A cheque for fifty pounds. More than that." He stared at her with terrible earnestness, almost wildly. "You can come to my shop and pick yourself a little jewellery. Anything. You see? You see?"

For a moment there was no response in her face except a remote smile. Then she spoke. "Jewellery? Well, that's nice," she said. "Jewellery?"

He wanted to speak again, but he could not. He looked instead at her eyes, which contained no hint of understanding. They were regarding him instead with a kind of impersonal pity.

He knew then what she was thinking. He lay back and closed his eyes in order to shut her out, and when he opened them again she was gone. On the walls and the blanket and on the scarred ceiling the grey light was growing greyer now with the dying of the afternoon.

When the nurse came back past the bed again she saw the little jeweller lying with closed eyes and the palms of his small, shrunken hands upturned across the bed. His lips were moving very slightly, but with her casual glance she did not notice them.

Nor could she hear what he was saying now. "Take me away. Take me away, please. O Lord, take me away!"

SOME PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES OF MUSIC

By ERIC WALTER WHITE

NATURAL SOUNDS COME from inanimate and animate sources. Wind in the reeds ; gurgling of water ; the fall of avalanches : bird-song ; the calls of animals ; the thud of footsteps ; the human speaking voice. Animals and men soon found the need of developing auditory apparatus as a means of evading the attacks of their enemies and of finding their food. The human ear was primarily an aid in the struggle for self-preservation ; but later man began to discover a pleasure in such simple sounds as the whistling of the wind over a broken reed, the beating of sticks, or the twang of his bowstring : and, in the words of Sir James Jeans in his authoritative work *Science and Music*, "on that day music was born."

Science explains that sound is a disturbance of the wave kind that needs a material medium in order to pass between the body disturbed and the listener's ear, and that the sound vibrations travel through air in wave formation at a speed of 1,100 feet per second, or 720 miles per hour. The wave motion of natural sounds reveals irregularities of the greatest complexity, while it is the regularity of the sound wave that distinguishes music from mere noise. The pitch of a sound depends on the frequency of the vibration by which it is produced ; and after long years of experiment it has been discovered that as a general rule two tones sound well together when the ratio of their frequencies can be expressed by the use of small numbers, and the smaller the numbers the

better the consonance. For instance, a unison has the frequency ratio of $1/1$, an octave $2/1$, a fifth $3/2$, and a fourth $4/3$. Polyphony represents the oligarchy of the tonal system; atonality is a soviet experiment: but, whatever system obtains, it is clear that music achieves most of its splendour through numbers.

Students of evolution claim that the ear with all its delicate mechanism (e.g. the cochlea with its fluid, and the basilar membrane with its 24,000 fibres corresponding to the sound-board and wires of a giant grand-piano) was the last of the sense-organs to arrive. Consequently it is not surprising to find Cecil Gray in his *Survey of Contemporary Music* suggesting that the sequence of artistic supremacies through the centuries began with architecture, continued with sculpture, painting, literature, and ended with music. A good case can certainly be made out for the periodical emergence and ascendancy of one art over the other arts during the course of history; but this does not necessarily imply the superiority of music among the arts. Pater's almost too celebrated *dictum* that all art aspires towards the condition of music is true only in so far as the arts of his own time were concerned. There is no specific quality or attribute peculiar to music that raises it above the condition of the other arts.

Art is the arbitrary selection of physical material and its translation to a plane where it is no longer subject to the march of time. Out of sound the composer and performer conjure music. The painter uses the visual phenomena of this world as material for his pictures. And numerous word currencies are available for writers. Having chosen his physical medium, the artist uses it to apprehend certain phenomena in such

a way as to translate them to a different plane and change them in the process. The value of the resultant representation lies, not in the superficial similitude of the work of art to a natural phenomenon—which, after all, exists in a totally different plane of reality and has no esthetic value in itself—but in the fresh presentation, the creation of something new, which, if well made according to its own laws, will have a separate existence on an esthetic plane where it will no longer be subject to the natural laws of time, change, and decay. The triumph of art over the immediate present is the triumph of life over death and implies the timeless projection of art into a serial future. It is clear that art was invented by the first man who doubted the existence of God while coveting the idea of personal immortality.

Comparisons between the arts are dangerous but attractive. Towards the end of the nineteenth century it became fashionable to compare music with architecture: Pater spoke of architecture as frozen music, and Oscar Wilde added his polished pebble to the cairn. In *Architecture and Music*, a study of reciprocal values published a few years ago, Alexander Walton traced a striking parallel between the two arts. He showed that “while architecture is designed in an exact quantity of space and theoretically for all time, music’s composition is in an exact quantity of time and theoretically for all space”. The realization of a building is carried out upwards from the ground, and the materials used in it are held in suspension by the operation of the law of gravity. Similarly a piece of music theoretically occupies a certain ideal quantity of time, but its realization is made possible by an interpretation of it in the terms of the continuous present.

The architectonic view of music is of the greatest assistance in understanding the formal problems that a composer has to solve. Themes or motives in so far as they are allotted to specific instruments or groups of instruments can be regarded as materials, each with different qualities and physical characteristics that can be expressed in terms of weight, strength, resistance, malleability, etc. These materials play certain parts in the building, and it is for the composer to use them to their best advantage and avoid placing them where they cannot bear the stresses and strains that devolve on them from the rest of the musical structure.

The architectonic principle can be clearly traced in the work of eighteenth century composers like Bach, Händel, Gluck, Haydn, and Mozart, just as the principle of crystallization would appear to provide the clue to the music of certain later composers such as Wagner and Sibelius. But at the beginning of the nineteenth century we find a new awareness in the music of Beethoven and his immediate successors. The invention of the metronome and the possibility of exactly marking variations in the speed at which music was to be performed meant that a composer found a new range of expression within his grasp—quite apart from the further range of expression that could be added to the music by an emotional and sometimes unscrupulous interpreter.

The tempo of a piece of music is judged by the frequency of the beats, whether actual or implied. This frequency is measured by the number of beats per minute—for instance, in the Allegretto of Beethoven's 7th Symphony, ♩=76, and there is the same metronome marking in Ravel's *Bolero*. Now, in the human body, the heart beats at a rate which starts at about 140 per

minute at birth and slows up, until at the age of biological maturity (about 16 years) it reaches the adult rate of 70 to 80 per minute. The constancy of this rate, however, depends on the careful balancing of impulses from the parasympathetic nerve and the sympathetic nerves ; and whenever stimulation occurs in an emergency to fit the body to meet a crisis, the pulse rate is increased. This happens when the body experiences almost any emotion other than contentment. Even pleasure causes an appreciable increase in the rate. In walking or running, the heart is called on to supply more blood to the muscles, and so it must beat harder and faster, the increased rate varying as the degree of exertion. In extreme physical exertion, the heart may beat up to 200 per minute, whereas without exertion and with only an emotion affecting it, it rarely rises above 150 per minute.

We here see how easily the different tempi of movements in a full-scale musical composition, or speed-variations within such movements, can produce sympathetic reactions upon a listener by inducing the illusion of a pulse rate suitable to certain emotions or bodily conditions. This is a physiological field that has been little exploited and is likely to yield startling results, for with this key one could analyse musical emotion from a scientific and non-subjective point of view and put to rout the idle dreamers who use music merely as a stimulus for inducing a cataleptic state of wish-fulfilment and mental masturbation.

A LETTER TO PHYLLIS

Intercepted by RUSSELL FERGUSON

DEAR PHYLLIS,

Guess what—I've seen *Ninotchka* ! It was the boss gave me a ticket, he said he had seen it twice, otherwise I should never have been able to afford to see it before it comes to the local, in about six months usually. Imagine me ever being able to spring three and six.

Well anyway I must tell you about it. It's ever such a nice picture and I liked it ever so much. It starts off with three Russians coming to Paris to sell some jewels for the five year plan. They were so funny, just like the three stooges. One of them was Gottlieb, you know, the man with the beard in *A Night at the Opera*, when Groucho says don't point that beard at me it might go off. I never saw the other two before, but never mind it doesn't matter. One of them had a cap, and none of them were properly dressed hardly. You would have died to have seen them in the best rooms in the Hotel, not knowing how to behave themselves or anything.

Well anyway Melvyn Douglas is a man who has some kind of claim to the jewels, I forget what. Oh yes, it was his girl really owned them though the Bolsheviks had stolen them from her mother, she was a Russian countess. So when the stooges see they're not going to get selling the jewels, they send for a special messenger from Russia I think, and its Greta Garbo.

When Greta comes she is terribly sobersided and can't see a joke and never laughs and goes about all the time with her face tripping her. She thinks all the Russians are needing food and gives the three stooges an awful row for wasting money in the best hotel. Of course it's

really Melvyn who's getting them all drunk every day so as to take the jewels off them, but she doesn't know that.

Melvyn meets her in the street and falls in love with her and follows her to the Eiffel Tower. She is so silly about the Eiffel Tower, she thinks it is a marvel of engineering or something. You would have died laughing at her taking an interest all about the height of it and cetera.

They go to his flat and she starts asking him questions about what he does for his fellow man. He says he does nothing, and she thinks this is terrible, because, as I say, she is terribly serious about everything. But she falls in love all the same. But here she finds out he is the man who's after the jewels, so she goes away.

It's so funny after she goes away. Melvyn starts reading all about Bolshevism and tries to argue with the butler and the butler doesn't want to be a Bolshie because he has more money in the bank than his master ! It just shows you, Bolshevism will never work here because all the servants have more money in the bank than their masters and they won't share it, and I don't blame them. It's what I always say, never be sorry for people, they have likely got more money than you.

The next day I forget what happens but anyway Greta is in love and goes about smiling and laughing like anything all the time. Melvyn follows her about, and they get drunk and he takes the jewels away. I forgot to tell you she says the jewels were bought with money the Czar got with selling 10,000 slaves. She thinks this is terrible, but Melvyn just laughs. Even though she's in love she can never see the funny side of a thing.

Well the only way she can get the jewels back to the

stooges is to go away and leave Melvyn to the other girl. I thought this bit of the picture was a bit silly, Phyllis, because if I was the other girl and I had my hands on all that jewellery I would stick to it, Melvyn or no Melvyn, but anyway you know what it's like in the pictures, love comes first, and Melvyn's girl gets Greta away back to Russia, and gets Melvyn back off Greta.

The next bit is ever so funny. All the same I'm glad I'm not a Russian. She lives in the same room with two other girls, one a cello player and one a tram conductor or something, all crowded together. It made me glad to be British just to look at it. Elsie and Willie have both got German measles just now, and the baby has the whooping cough, so our own room is a bit stuffy at times, but all the same there's no tram conductors or cello players in it, thank goodness.

What a come-down for Greta after Paris ! Of course she is all miserable and gloomy again because she hasn't got Melvyn, and though it was funny for us looking at it, she hated it. Imagine, having to work again instead of staying in all the best hotels and wearing nice dresses. It shows the Russians' politics are all wrong, doesn't it ? Everybody having to work and that. I'm glad I live in a decent country. I go to St. George's, Hanover Square, at lunch time sometimes to see if there are any big weddings on, and I often stand in the crowd looking at the bride and bridegroom and all the guests' marvellous clothes, and I would rather be British than Russian any day. Sometimes I get an awful row off the boss for being late back from lunch just with watching all the lovely clothes.

Anyway Greta works away at a lot of nonsense

about agriculture or something, until she gets sent to Constantinople because the stooges are in trouble again. This time she finds they've broken their word about selling some furs for the Soviets and have started a restuarant. She starts to give them an awful row, but Melvyn comes out from behind a screen, and it's him that has made them break their word and set them up as a restuarant ! All the same it seemed a bit funny to me that he could afford to set them up as a restuarant when he couldn't afford to pay his rent or his servant's wages early in the picture, but you know how it is in pictures, everybody has always plenty of money at the end, anyway I forgot about it when he embraced her, and it was the end of the picture. The picture ended up happy, because she just never bothered about all her promises to the Soviets, or the stooges, or agriculture, or the restuarant, or anything, she just married Melvyn, and that was the end.

It was ever such a nice picture, and I enjoyed it ever so much. It made me glad to belong to a country where everybody isn't poor and dirty. I must stop now because I have a few things to wash through for to-morrow. Fred gave me a nice slip for my birthday, that's a white and a blue I've got now. I expect you're quite jealous.

Yours ever,

FANNY.

REVIEWS OF RELEASES

UN VILLAGE DANS PARIS. (London Film Institute Society, at the Tatler. Production, René Clair and Marcel Hubsch. Direction, Pierre Hartz.)

THE LONDON FILM Institute resumed its Sunday afternoon performances with a programme which did not suggest for one minute what must have been the difficulties under which it was assembled. A new Len Lye, a short of Chinese war songs on the lines of the "bouncing ball" cartoons, a pleasant documentary of Paris, and a three-minute Zenifilm, advocating the Channel Tunnel, made excellent support for the main picture, Joris Ivens' new work. Welcome comic relief was provided by a film called *Desert Boy*; this was alleged to be "remarkable for its pictorial quality and as a true and unvarnished impression of native life and customs" in the Libyan desert. That it may have been, but what it showed even more remarkably was the influence of Sabu and the B.B.C. on the oasis of Siwa.

SWINGING THE LAMBETH WALK. (London Film Institute Society, at the Tatler. Production, Tida. Direction, Len Lye. Dufaycolor.)

SELECTIONS, CHOSEN FOR their "swing" quality, were taken from various recordings of the Lambeth Walk, and linked together by Ernest Meyer. At this date, there is no need to say what Len Lye is likely to do with such material. It matters mainly that he has done it even more gaily than might have been expected. Technical note: horizontal lines synchronize with the plucked solo guitar notes and the vertical elastic colour band twangs in time to the double bass. I found it both the best Len Lye and the best Lambeth Walk

I had seen and heard, and, if I may be pardoned for mentioning the subject, how grateful we are that a new Lye appears in war-time.

THE 400 MILLION. (London Film Institute Society, at the Tatler. Production, History To-Day, Garrison Films, New York. Direction, Joris Ivens and John Ferno. Editing, Helen van Dongen. Assistant in China, Robert Capa. Assistant, G. L. George. Commentary, Dudley Nichols. Speaker, Frederic March.)

NO DIRECTOR OF documentary is more to be trusted than Joris Ivens. His newest work is a record of, and therefore a tribute to, the Chinese at war. *The 400 Million* is their *Spanish Earth*. As filmcraft, it is inevitably inferior, for the conditions under which it was made were more difficult. But the spirit in which it was made, and the spirit which it shows, are as noble; you cannot ask more than that. It is not a pretty picture—the first sequence is one of the most appalling I have seen, but I feel it should not be labelled as “horrific”, for that it should be seen by everyone—not for the horror, but for the bravery with which the Chinese face horror. It is not the bravery of despair, but of determination. The war waged on China has caused five million military casualties and turned forty million civilians into refugees. That fact is ghastly, but the answer to that fact, the mood of that answer, is heartening, and the film never loses sight of the one in the other. It should have been seen all over the country. One can understand that, just now, many would be unwilling to see it, but this is not the sensationalism of the news reels. As it is, we must be grateful that it was in this country for one performance, in war time.

DESTRY RIDES AGAIN. (Leicester Square. Production, Joe Pasternak, Universal. Direction, George Marshall. With Marlene Dietrich, James Stewart, Una Merkel, Mischa Auer, Charles Winninger, etc.)

I SAT THROUGH *Destry Rides Again* only once, but it is a film I have seen many times. . . . Dietrich is in cabaret again. It has taken Hollywood ten years to realize that is her forte; it's a bit piano by now, since time marches on (leaving footmarks rather like a *Secrets of Nature* fly on cheese). Still, it's nice to see Dietrich, even if she hasn't used her absence from the screen to learn that it isn't enough to be seen. She is vivacious, works hard, cashes in on period-interest, but brings absolutely nothing to a part which relays of small-time actresses have before now used as a springboard to bigger and better things. The rest of the cast, which teems with talent, behaves as if it were thoroughly at home; in fact, *Destry Rides Again* reminded me of nothing so much as a cage in a Zoo, in which the regulars are being surprisingly polite to the new inmates, because they know that, that way, they'll get more peanuts from the public. The second newcomer to this cage is James Stewart. He brings a nice air of being more at home somewhere else, and that serves its purpose of reminding us that there are other films. This one's like most—we know that mirror, we know that chair, we know one'll be broken against the other, and, oh, that spangled dress! Oh, too, the horde of respectable women who turn up to smash the bar—never having made their weight felt before. And why, as Dietrich gets frailer, fake her voice to a robustness it never had, even in the days when it had somewhere to come from?

THE ARSENAL STADIUM MYSTERY. (Astoria, Charing Cross Road. G. and S. Film. Directed by Thorold Dickinson. Technical adviser, George Allison. With Leslie Banks, Anthony Bushell, E. V. H. Emmett, Maire O'Neill, Esmond Knight, etc.)

IT IS ONE of the advantages of cinema-going that a second-feature is by no means always a second-rate film. In thus introducing this picture, I am not belittling Thorold Dickinson's new film. He would be the last, I imagine, to call it a masterpiece. The material for a masterpiece wasn't there. He would, I hope, think it a good job. I found it such. It's a ham story. But it's a good detective drama, for those who like that kind of thing, and even more. I don't, myself. Detective dramas usually entail a frenzy of footling round appallingly furnished flats which make me wish everyone concerned had met the death their dire and apparently unhampered lack of taste deserved. Inhabitants of flats in this film are no exception, except that they are rather worse photographed than usual. But then, why photograph a mannequin at her best? So many others do, at least let's once see her as she is. . . .

More important is speed, control of matter, sense of life, knowledge. Dickinson has these. Most important, above all for this kind of film, he has wit. This film is only a murder mystery, but it lives. Set in football dressing-rooms—all right, the director knows how to show them to us. Set in Scotland Yard—all right, the director has views, as well as angles, about that. This film is swift, and slick, and tolerably sure; where it isn't, it glosses over difficulties by being unexpected. A good way out—and a good way to lead people in.

I should add that it's a little odd that both the teams and the public take the death of a famous footballer so lightly, even though no one could like him; apart from this, you get the down on the game, without it being too low, George Allison is a discovery, and Bryn Jones is, if I've got the phrase right, worth anyone's money.

THE STARS LOOK DOWN. (Odeon, Leicester Square. Grafton Production. Directed by Carol Reed. With Michael Redgrave, Nancy Price, Emlyn Williams, Edward Rigby, Margaret Lockwood, etc. From the novel by A. J. Cronin.)

LITTLE BY LITTLE the British studios wake up. Save me from chanting that old war-cry, "life as it is lived." Most people live it very badly, and therefore there is an argument for keeping quiet about it. What we want to see is what makes them live it as they do—not only the conditions, but the spirit or lack of spirit in themselves; the quality of that spirit; and the ends to which it is directed. The absence of this from all British films save documentaries has been what has made British films as dull as to-day's news by the time we get it (two weeks hence, and then decently prepared for burial). Slowly, not only the actions of ordinary people, but their poetry, is finding expression on the screen. *The Citadel* gave us something. *The Stars Look Down* gives us much more. It took an American (King Vidor) to do *The Citadel*—or rather, an English director was not trusted with it. But that was a year ago, and now it is a young English director who has

made the best film to come out of an English studio. Cronin's books are, I imagine, a gift to the imaginative director; their lack of style and shape must urge one to make something out of the material. Carol Reed has made a full solid picture of English mining, and of English industrial life. It is the sort of picture which stands on its own feet and talks plainly, but honestly. It knows what it is about. Faults there are naturally—I thought the butcher's shop too bright and well-stocked for the neighbourhood, and it was a pity to introduce Emlyn Williams on that wall, he emphasized himself quite enough as it was. Margaret Lockwood overdid her part, but remained the kind of young woman that a young man bettering himself has, for that reason, so often made a mistake in. From the rest of the cast, the director drew first-rate performances, from none better than from Nancy Price. She is an actress who usually stands high in my disfavour, but here I forgot everything about past performances, and felt only the heaviness and the hate hidden in the bones of that old mining mother (it is strange that, in the English mining district, the young man who gains a scholarship is looked down on; in the community of *The Citadel*, one feels he would have been cheered and actively helped by his Welsh fellow-miners, proud of learning). *The Stars Look Down* is, indeed, a director's film. And any who know the cinema will know that it will have been for that reason that you could look all over all the posters outside the Odeon, see all who were in it, but never find out who did the most difficult job of all—bring order into the stars, before they were able to look down (instead of at the camera).

THE PROUD VALLEY. (Leicester Square Theatre. Production, Michael Balcon. Direction, Pen Tennyson. Story and screen play by Herbert Marshall and Jack Jones. With Paul Robeson, Rachel Thomas, Dilys Davies, Clifford Evans, etc.)

ROBESON'S EXCURSION INTO Wales gives us singing, Welsh interiors full of "that cordial air" Hopkins wrote of, and it introduces to the screen two women, Rachel Thomas and Dilys Davies, who have much to give. But it is not a serious film, in the sense in which *The Stars Look Down* and some sequences of *The Citadel* are serious. The story, though an improvement on those of Robeson's previous English films, suffers from being "typical", but all is pretty well until a deputation of miners start off from Blaendy for London. As usual in films, the brass band which sees them off is recorded as a full orchestra; they walk through the towns like tramps, drawing no attention to themselves as a deputation, so they might as well have hopped lorries. They arrive in London just before war is declared—and this deputation of out-of-work miners, which went up to fight the owners, walks in and does its own case down by suggesting that the owners reopen a pit, sealed because dangerous; one of their number has already been killed in an accident at that pit, but they are not asking for better working conditions, they are letting the owners trade on their unemployment to make them work in a dangerous pit on their own responsibility—and we are asked to believe that the miners suggest this so that they can provide the coal to help the National Government to victory. . . . Well, we expected novelty from Robeson appearing in a Welsh film, and it is

certainly a break with tradition thus to present the mine-owner's case. It also seemed a little odd that when an Eistedfodd was postponed, because one of the choirs had lost its conductor, the choir on its eventual appearance did not compete, but sang instead *Deep River*, as a tribute to the dead man. To hear Robeson sing *Deep River* is always a pleasure. But considering the setting, I had hoped to hear him sing a few more Welsh songs, and ones not necessarily so familiar as *All Through the Night* and *Land of My Fathers*, which he sings rather perfunctorily. This seemed to me a failure to take advantage of one of the genuine reasons to put Robeson in a Welsh film. Rachel Thomas sings so as to bring tears to your eyes, though only at the end. But all through she is lovely. It is a pleasure too, to meet again Dilys Davies from *Rhondda Roundabout*. Despite overacting in the character-parts the cast is in general good, and none better than Clifford Evans. *The Proud Valley*, indeed, gives us much, but a little less confusion of aim would have resulted in giving us more.

R. H.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

WAR BEGINS AT HOME. Mass-Observation. Chatto and Windus. 9s. 6d.

TO THE MAJORITY of people in Britain, the declaration of war appeared a relief from anxiety. The war of nerves was over, and the war of arms had begun. Fear was easier to face than fear of fear.

Everybody had his own fantasy of what war would mean, but the most popular fantasy in the minds of politicians, soldiers, writers, and film-producers as well as the general public was modelled on *The Shape of Things to Come*. At the sounding of the first false siren, A.R.P. wardens, Auxiliary Firemen, Special Constables felt that at last the occasion had come to test that home defence organization so laboriously constructed over the last year. The civilian gas-mask, from being the symbol of the horror of war, became the symbol of preparedness, a friendly object.

During the ensuing months, the war of arms did not develop. The war of blockade, already being waged before the declaration of 3rd September, was intensified by naval action. Measures of preparedness were completed, armies remained mobilized but inactive, planes openly engaged in reconnaissance, the civilian army stayed permanently at its posts, the paper plans for evacuation and the remodelling of civilian life for war conditions were put into effect. But the anxiety, which had united the country in support of the declaration of war, was not relieved. It was in fact increased by a number of factors, the mass dismissal of employees, the rise in the cost of living, the upheaval in family life due to evacuation, the mounting burden of taxation and the strain imposed by the black-out.

The bewilderment caused by the failure of the war to develop along the anticipated military lines created a problem of explanation, which the Tory Government has been unable to solve. Mr. Chamberlain described the war as "this strangest of wars"; an accurate description but a poor reassurance to a puzzled people.

Propaganda put out by different government departments made bewilderment worse. The Air Ministry wished to dissipate civilian fears regarding the adequacy of our air-defence, the classic example of which is the panic of the German aviators on seeing a balloon barrage in *The Lion has Wings*. Meanwhile the Ministry of Health wished to impress the need for keeping children in reception areas by stressing the vulnerability of large towns. Cutting across these, the Ministry of Information put out photographs of the Royal children shopping at Harrods on the way through London to spend Christmas at Sandringham. (If the Princesses are safe in London, then all the children are, was one of the most potent arguments for bringing children home at Christmas.)

In official quarters, the attitude to the non-military character of the war is apologetic. "This does not appear to be a real war," they almost say, "but to prove that it is, we are spending six million pounds a day and when spring comes, we may have some casualty lists to show that we are really fighting."

As a result of the failure to explain the nature of blockade warfare, a dangerous tendency is growing up. "I've got so I don't care who I fight, as long as it's someone," one young man remarked to me, just after volunteering. Another, "I know it sounds awful, but I want to see the casualty lists just so I know it's really started." Alternatively and in conjunction with utter

boredom at the mention of the war, a belief fostered by official spokesmen has arisen, that the mere passage of time will defeat Germany.

In a war of blockade, not the passage of time, but the wise control of economic resources and the maintenance of civilian morale are the two most important factors for victory. The Chamberlain Government, divorced from contact with the general public, has shown abysmal ignorance of what the community wants, thinks or feels. It has increased bewilderment, and by directing the brunt of its economy measures against the working and lower middle class produced a discontent, suppressed by newspapers, but apparent to anyone travelling in a third class railway carriage.

At the same time, it has constantly given way to the more vocal and financially more powerful private interests, resisting the control necessary to the successful prosecution of the war. Fascism, the employment of State machinery to further the interests of a small group of immensely powerful private corporations at the expense of the smaller corporations and the working class, becomes daily more firmly established. Written in the statute book are the measures ready to be invoked when necessary against those who seek to reverse this process. A degree of collectivization is necessary for the prosecution of war, but the present collectivization is not in the interest of victory but the establishment of trade monopolies.

These are briefly the conclusions of Mass-Observation's study of the impact of the war on different sections of the community. In peacetime, M.O. proved its usefulness in obtaining material on subjects, ignored or inadequately handled by writers, journalists or

politicians. In wartime, when rumour supplants knowledge and wishful thinking thought, the function of M.O. is more important than it ever was. Furthermore, the refinement of technique by experience and the accumulation of data over three years has given Harrisson, Madge and fellow workers a finer apparatus for judging mass reaction.

Home Defence, War-fantasies, Wishful Thinking, Black-out, Dance-music, Sport, Culture, Evacuation, are among the subjects treated in *War Begins at Home*. In certain respects, due chiefly to pressure of time, the treatment is rather sketchy. But the information included outweighs omissions in importance. Though proofs have been badly corrected and grammar sometimes goes haywire, M.O. has produced a war-document of major importance both to contemporary and future readers. Its data are needed by every man and woman in this country; its arguments cannot be ignored or swept aside.

Two major criticisms come to mind. The first is at present unavoidable. Though M.O. is branching out into a weekly Newsletter, *US*, (6, Grotes Buildings, Blackheath, S.E. 3, 5s. per quarter), they cannot at present afford to maintain a full time rural unit, with the result that urban material tends to dominate reports. The second is one to which the M.O. directors will have to devote more thought. It is inevitable that in the presentation of factual material there must be an underlying policy, and philosophy. The editors admit bias, but plead that readers with other bias will have to hand the material on which to form their own conclusions. Trouble begins, however, when as in the chapter of *The Cash Front*, the editors have not clearly

formulated their own conclusions. The rejection of M.O. by the Ministry of Information, the still adolescent querulousness which creeps in when M.O.'s relationships with the government, the press, or the intelligentsia are discussed, can easily be discounted. The thesis that the war is a necessary war, but Chamberlain and his class mates are incompetent and unwilling to fight it, can be lifted from the book without impairing the importance of the documentary. But when, as in the financial section, the mass-observers are as confused as the mass-observed, bewilderment spreads to the reader also.

M.O. is an opinion-tester; its interest in opinion-formation is secondary. The characteristic of the war so far has been that the instruments of publicity, B.B.C., press, books, and political speeches, have so lost contact with public needs that no official stereotype for thought has been produced. The nearest approach to an official stereotype is Federal Union, an idealistic peace plan which may be conveniently used at a later date for attack on the Soviet Union. But even Federal Union has only succeeded with that small minority, which needs, like Mr. Britling, a purer war-aim than the Government's to fight for, without reflecting that when the fighting is over, the real squabbling for commercial markets will start round the peace table.

No official attempt has been made to explain War-Britain to the British. No convincing stereotype has been made to allay anxiety. So, alarming though M.O. may be in many of its conclusions, it is possible that the opinion-observers will prove to be opinion-makers by interpreting the positions of the mass to the individuals forming it.

A. CALDER-MARSHALL

SCIENCE AND EVERYDAY LIFE. J. B. S. HALDANE.

Lawrence and Wishart. 5s.

THIS BOOK IS made up of articles contributed by Haldane to the *Daily Worker* over a period of sixteen months and one of its objects is to relate the results of modern scientific work to our daily lives. Ranging from thunderstorms to vitamins, from A.R.P. to genes, Haldane treats a very wide range of subjects each with the same clarity, economy of words, and wealth of up-to-date scientific evidence—a remarkable achievement nowadays, when most men of science find it difficult to keep in touch with the developments in even one or two branches of scientific work. But he does in this book much more than hand out information on a variety of problems of daily life. His critical vision shows us familiar knowledge in a new and astonishing light, giving, as John Livingstone Lowes says of original poetry, “to the expected the thrill of discovery.” Lowes was writing of what Browning called the “repristination” of the old, but Haldane takes both the old and the newest of the new and so recombines them that he extracts a newer vision still. This quality is rare among literary men; it is rarer still among men of science and can be as valuable as original research itself. We need much more of it in public print.

We are told, too, in most of the articles, the names of many of the devoted men who have given their work to the world and realize that science can never say a final word about anything. Every maker of a great scientific discovery has been the last of a series of obscure and modest workers without whose labours the great discovery could never have been made. These brief historical notes also show us that science is not the

prerogative, of any country or of any political group, but is international, free to all and largely dependent on public funds or on the benefactions of large-spirited men.

This latter fact should be remembered when we encounter, in most of the articles in this book, gratuitous smacks at the rich, the capitalist (and, indeed, at all who are not communists), this unfortunate class of people being sometimes dragged in by the scruff of the neck to hear the author's opinion of their hardheartedness. These political interpolations are rarely more than a sentence or two long; they never distort the scientific fact for the sake of politics, Haldane being too good a scientist to be capable of that; but they are not likely to help either science or the Marxist cause which they uphold. On page 186, for example, blood transfusion and blood groups are well explained, but Haldane also says: "I believe that every healthy communist ought to be ready to give his blood, and not only to comrades. A pint of good red communist blood is better propaganda for the party of Marx and Lenin than a gallon of Tory beer for the Nationalist government. For this reason, it is worth while finding out to what group one belongs."

Men who buy books on science do not expect to be buying politics; they certainly do not expect to be buying such stuff as that. The men of science, moreover, who find their work being used in this way have every right to protest. There are very few of them who do not wholeheartedly sympathize with Haldane's zeal to see the fruits of science used to the full for the benefit of men, whatever their social status or nationality. Their work is discussed with insight and understanding in this book. At five shillings it should not be beyond the means

of anyone, whatever his politics, who wishes to learn of the wonder and the marvel of our world.

G. LAPAGE

DANGEROUS THOUGHTS. LANCELOT HOGBEN.
Allen and Unwin. 10s. 6d.

PROFESSOR HOGBEN is a temperamental dissenter. He believes in co-operation, but finds few with whom he can co-operate. He believes that individuality cannot be preserved unless merged into the welfare of society, yet is forced to oppose all other socialists, because he considers that they are as misguided as the capitalists. Antagonistic to solipsism, he is almost as isolated as the solipsist, because he cannot regard anybody except himself as the true prophet of the new world.

This temperamental twist which makes the Professor exaggerate the importance of his claim does not make his writing unimportant. "Scientific Humanism," or "Hogbenism", maintains that the solution of our problems can only be found in educational change. "Classics" which since the Renaissance have dominated British education have, more and more with the advancement of knowledge in other fields, cramped the intelligence instead of releasing it. The Oxford school of Lit. Hum., concentrated on dead languages and dead philosophies, succeeds in frustrating intelligence by posing metaphysically insoluble questions unrelated to living. As a result, the Oxford intellectual after two years of Plato, Aristotle, and the theory of knowledge is incapable of knowing anything actual.

I agree with Professor Hogben's analysis as far as it goes. Oxford education destroys the dynamic intelligence, and at the time when young men most need the

training which will help them to understand the world in which they live, frustrates the desire for knowledge with a sterile introversion of thought upon thinking. The result is that Oxford graduates have to spend years undoing the harm of their university training.

But those that do not undo the harm emerge with a cynicism and an eye for the main chance, the philosophical justification for the suppression of social conscience without which the governing class of an empire founded on the exploitation of native populations could not possibly persist.

In the place of this education, Professor Hogben would teach "scientific humanism", science, that is to say, in its historical context, history, geography, literature, and economics, philosophy and architecture in their scientific context. (Professor G. N. Clark's study of *The Seventeenth Century* is the best example of this method, showing the interrelation of scientific discovery, religion, economics, and other trends.) I agree with Professor Hogben that such a method of teaching must be the object of every educationist whose purpose is to transmit knowledge to his pupils. I also agree that a generation educated in such a way would have much less difficulty than we shall to find the solution of our ills. That the solution can only be found in some form of socialism, as Professor Hogben argues, is surely the reason that under capitalism scientific humanism will remain a dream in the minds of serious educationists.

We have to-day the type of education that the British Empire needs, if it is to persist in its past form. Education does not change the economic and political development of a nation nearly as much as they change education. Our teachers, like teachers since the beginning of time,

are paid to produce people who will preserve the *status quo*. Educational changes come because no one can ever succeed in making time stand still.

In *Dangerous Thoughts*, which, by the way, is not planned as a book but a collection of papers on different subjects, there are constant allusions to "democracy", but the author never defines what he means by "democracy". France is a "democracy", though several million of its citizens are disfranchised and M. Daladier has dictatorial powers. Great Britain is a democracy, though it depends upon over three hundred and fifty million people who are not allowed the vote or self-government. The U.S.S.R. where everybody is allowed to vote but the candidates all belong to one party . . . is that more a democracy than the British Empire or less? In Mexico, every party is labelled Revolutionary. There is the progressive, Mexican Revolutionary Party and the fascist, Revolutionary Anti-communist Party. It is only by deleting the word Revolutionary that we can understand their true aims. Professor Hogben seems to find some common element between socialist democracy and capitalist democracy. But in the final analysis, the common element is eliminated from both these systems and their identity is purely verbal.

Education along the lines set down by Professor Hogben will come only as the result of a transition to socialism. Men and women with the technique such an education would give them could then take on the building of socialism from the pioneers. But to expect the order to be reversed is to invite a class of capitalists, whose grasp of human needs may be relaxed but whose hold on privilege remains firm, to put their necks voluntarily on the chopping block. As a thinker, still labouring

under the disabilities of Oxford Lit. Hum., I venture to suggest that the scientific humanist is being here as unrealistic as any Greats don.

A. CALDER-MARSHALL

THE GERMAN ARMY. HERBERT ROSINSKI. The Hogarth Press. 12s. 6d.

ROSINSKI'S BOOK MAKES interesting reading, not only for the military historian but for everybody interested in the recent developments within Germany.

The thousand years of strife of the Holy Roman Empire and the terrible miseries of the Thirty Years War, "when Germany became the battlefield for all the feuds of Europe," have hammered in the conviction of the German nation that war is inevitable. Battles were fought by mercenaries. Frederick the Great conceived for the first time the necessity of a national force and with him the living memory of the Prussian army begins; "what to Great Britain was a glorious epic of colonial conquest to Frederick meant a desperate fight." In spite of these struggles and of the Seven Years War, he was able to starve Germany, literally, into greatness and to create an army of 132,000 men, a considerable force for the time. Rank and file were taken from so-called "cantons" and iron discipline was maintained amongst them. The officers' corps was formed by nobles; to serve was regarded as an honour reserved only for the aristocrats. The officer came next to the king and by giving him certain privileges, such as power to purchase land, Frederick attracted aristocrats from all the countries of Europe. Eventually two-thirds of the officers' corps were foreign-born.

The mobile warfare of Napoleonic times made personal leadership impossible and necessitated the foundation of the German General Staff. Their most prominent exponents were von Scharnhorst and von Stein, and their military philosopher von Clausewitz. The latter coined the word that war is nothing but the continuation of politics with different means. For him war was a coherent continuous whole, directed to the complete overthrow of the enemy.

The superiority of mobile warfare was maintained throughout and old Field-Marshal Moltke used to give his directions on a simple large scale railway map of Europe. After the three victorious campaigns in 1864, 1866, and 1870, the German army reached the height of its glory. The long period of peace from 1871 to 1914 was used for intensive training as a preparation for mobile warfare. The trench warfare in the West where the Allies could use their superiority in men and material, together with the political disruption in Germany, led to the final collapse in 1918.

The remains of the German army were gathered in the "Reichswehr" of the German republic. Restricted through the treaty of Versailles to 100,000 men it represented the pick of the best men in Germany. Politically the Reichswehr had no contact with the republic but remained a "state in the state" and faithful to its monarchist traditions. Hitler's rise to power gave the Reichswehr a new hope for a monarchist restoration; therefore they did not object to it but believed that they would have the power to check it when desired. The rearmament of the last years, to which the Allies replied merely by paper protests, led to a large increase in the numbers of the army. So long

as Hindenburg was still alive the army had a strong backing. After his death the S.S. succeeded more and more in increasing its power, even in the army. The German army gradually gave up its traditions and did not even protest when General von Schleicher was murdered, joining the intrigues of the new regime.

Germany lost the last war because its army had not sufficient contact with politics. Now it seems that politics have not sufficient contact with the army. The Nazi Reich degrades the army by turning it into an instrument of propaganda, intimidation and military pressure and has forgotten the teachings of Clausewitz. Their ideal is the "leader general" who in the Blitzkrieg (an Italian import, not a German invention) will decide the fate of nations.

WALTER SCHMIDEBERG

CHINA IN PEACE AND WAR. MADAME CHIANG KAI-SHEK. Preface by CHARLOTTE HALDANE. Hurst and Blackett. 16s.

THE WIFE OF the Generalissimo of China has played a great part, by her courage, energy and resourcefulness, in arousing the people's resistance to Japan's criminal invasion. It is significant of the vast changes taking place in the world to-day, that even in China, with its historic tradition of the seclusion of women from public life, there should have arisen a really mass response to the call for women to enter fully into social activity. Though hastened by the war with Japan, this is a phase of the national revolutionary movement and it is in relation to this whole period of development that Madame Chiang conceives her mission—the present

ordeal being a tragic interlude in the process of emancipating the people from the hampering restrictions of their feudal past. The political unification of China and the raising of the standard of living by the adaptation of "American" technique to the specific traditions of China—that is the material aim which informs Madame Chiang's essays and speeches. In other terms, she envisages China as an enlightened capitalism, entering into free and equal relations with the world imperialist powers.

That this view is not shared by the rulers of those imperialisms becomes apparent when we consider the response to Madame Chiang's poignant appeals to the great democracies :

" After all, respect for the territorial and administrative integrity of our country was solemnly agreed upon by a congress of nations. If that agreement were not to be upheld in case of violation, what good was served in having the treaty in the first place? What good is any treaty may we, who are being despoiled, tortured, and done to death, ask, if no retribution is to be exacted from nations who scorn it when suitable to them. . . . Or again, it is puzzling to the Chinese mind why anyone should bother subscribing to something that seems to mean a lot, but in reality, when the test comes, resolves itself into meaning nothing."

There must be a lot of people of other nationalities in the world to-day who are similarly puzzled. Madame Chiang's book does not supply any solution; that would involve a change in the nature of imperialism, which can only thrive when nations are weak, to which genuine national independence is the abomination of desolation.

But the book is timely now, when our own distress

may make us unmindful of the wider aspects of world affairs with which it is indissolubly linked. The heroism and constructive effort which China has put forth in the last two years must not be frustrated by a sordid deal between Japan, Britain and the U.S.A.

Some excellent photographs illustrate the text, and are an appropriate commentary on the hope and confidence with which Madame Chiang speaks of the future of her country.

EDGELL RICKWORD

THE AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE.

Lt.-Gen. Sir GEORGE MACMUNN. Bell. 15s.

FEW EVENTS HAVE more influenced the course of modern history and remained so little understood, as the American War of Independence. Even to-day, opposition to a sympathetic understanding of British problems in the States, springs from the mistakes we made in the second half of the eighteenth century. Sir George Macmunn gives a clear picture of the struggle, and the details of the Loyalist corps and of the German troops employed will save the student from hours of search among text books. The bias, however, is so definitely pro-British that it would be unwise to depend upon the book unless it be checked with other, American, accounts of the struggle; say Franklin's autobiography or the interesting diaries of Gouvenour Morris. We had mismanaged the situation so appallingly (one is reminded of the report on conditions in the West Indies to-day) that it is difficult to see how the colonists could have acted, except by rebellion.

BRYHER

ART

MODERN FRENCH PAINTERS. R. H. WILENSKI.
Faber. Illustrated. 30s.

THIS MOST CAREFUL history of French painting from the year 1863 to the present time begins with a Prologue in five Scenes showing the birth and development of Impressionism up to 1883, after which come four Acts covering approximately as many decades, also in many Scenes, recording the inevitable growth into Symbolism, Fauvism, Futurism and the other Isms down to the latest phenomenon of Neo-Surrealism. We are told where pictures were painted, the year where and when exhibited, and footnotes state where they are now, in which public gallery, or, if in a private collection, the name and place of the owner. This last appears to me to be an excess of thoroughness; pictures in private collections change hands, and perhaps even now some of these notes are inaccurate.

Along with the life of the painters in all these years is a rapid, breathless account of what was happening simultaneously in all the other arts and politics; this produces a kind of cultural snapshot of a period.

This book will be of real value to students of the History of Painting, it is a long procession of facts, but is written in a lively interesting style, not without some little humour in places ("In the next year 1891 Jean Cocteau was born." "In this year 1899 Jean Cocteau aged seven was taken to the Nouveau Cirque to see Lautrec's favourite clowns Chocolat and Footit"), but too long a stretch of this kind of thing makes one a little dizzy:

"Bauchant now painted *Les gardeuses de chèvres* ² and *La promenade dans le parc* ³ where the trees are treated with a delicacy rivalling The Douanier's handling in *Dame en brun dans la forêt* ⁴ painted twenty years earlier; Bombois painted *Deux fillettes aux bouquets* ⁵ and *La Cathédrale d'Albi* ⁶; and Vivin painted the exquisitely coloured and classically formalized *Nature morte aux huîtres* (Pl. 84a)."

There is an excellent Bibliography and Appendices, forty-five pages of Index (double columns) and ninety-six pages of beautiful reproductions in chronological order. Mr. Wilenski has done an admirably thorough piece of work.

GEORGE MARVELLS

MASTERPIECES OF EUROPEAN PAINTING IN AMERICA. 317 reproductions edited by Professor H. TIETZE. Allen and Unwin. 10s. 6d.

NOTHING IMPRESSES THE visitor to the States more than the immense wealth of its museums and art collections. America is, in fact, to the modern traveller what Italy was to his predecessors of a hundred years ago. It was an excellent idea to prepare a volume of reproductions for those students who are unable to cross the Atlantic and also to give the places where the paintings may be found for those who would have but a short time in the country. The selection of the plates is comprehensive and adequate; it is a pity only that they are not always as clear as we might expect.

MORID SPALDING

SILHOUETTES AND SCISSOR-CUTTING. HUBERT LESLIE. Illustrated. Bodley Head. 6s.

THE ART MASTER of Brighton College has much to say, mostly in a rather querulous tone, about the art of

silhouettes. His own examples do not strengthen confidence in his standards of art, and his book is chiefly useful as the only modern treatise on the technique of scissor-cutting. As such, it seems strange that he pays no attention to the work of Lotte Reiniger, who has done so much to revive interest in the silhouette, whilst giving it new life by her combination of scissor-work and cinematography.

H. K. FISHER

THEATRE

VILLAGE THEATRE. Mary Kelly. Nelson. 3s. 6d.

IN 1918 MARY KELLY, who until then had hardly been to the theatre a dozen times in her life, stumbled upon the fact that a strong sense of beauty lay beneath the surface of her fellow villagers in Devon; and, as it appeared to her that this might most naturally be expressed through drama, she founded a group of local village players and so laid the foundations of the Village Drama Society (later to be amalgamated with the British Drama League). She has now written what she describes as "a kind of testament" to sum up all she has known and thought about village drama. The result is a book that deals enthusiastically (though sometimes superficially) with the beginnings of drama, with the medieval miracles and folk plays, and then breaks off in order to discuss the sociological evolution of the peasant, small-holder, and farmer through the last four centuries before resuming the main thread of her argument and ending with a comprehensive survey of the pre-war position of the village theatre in England and other countries.

The industrial revolution brought about material

changes in our social structure that disturbed the proper relationship between town and country and created artificial barriers between the two. The problems so raised still remain unsolved, and until they are solved, the present distinction between town theatre and village theatre is bound to be unsatisfactory. Typical manifestations of the medieval village theatre, like the Mummers' or Plough Jags' Plays, or the Morris or Sword Dances, may now be on the verge of extinction; but the spirit that informed these primitive *ludi* remains as strong as ever, though it may assume unfamiliar forms. Mary Kelly's book is to be welcomed in so far as it is likely to focus interest on the recent revival of drama in the country, but it would have been of greater value if it had been more carefully planned and documented.

ERIC WALTER WHITE

THE SPICE OF LIFE. GEORGE FOSTER. Illustrated.
Hurst and Blackett. 10s. 6d.

GEORGE FOSTER BEGAN his connection with the stage by being employed to throw a bouquet twice nightly to a music-hall singer as if from an unknown admirer. This job ended when he tried to make the bouquet last three nights, whilst still drawing the daily money for it. He then became a vocal comedian, and was in the programme in which Gus Elen made his début. He became engaged to Marie Lloyd and it was the breaking of that which gave Elen the inspiration for his song, *Never Introduce Your Donah*. When he realized that "George Foster as a variety star was not very likely to happen", he became a variety agent, and in that capacity has been responsible for booking such artists as Kate Carney,

Florrie Forde, Billy Bennett, and for introducing to music-halls in this country Sophie Tucker, Norah Bayes, Jeannette Macdonald, Ethel Barrymore, the Marx Brothers (long before their films), Lew Leslie's Blackbirds, and other famous Americans.

He is now seventy-five; his memories include Charles Godfrey, singer of *After the Ball*; Nelly Farren, who stayed eighteen years at one theatre, and Cheeves and Kennedy, the first American act to appear here; their success was so great that the management built another balcony to their theatre. Mr. Foster can tell us that in 1891 a Gaiety piece was tried out prior to London presentation—in Melbourne! and that the Salvation Army used the tune of *Two Lovely Black Eyes* for the hymn *My Jesus Has Died*. Moreover, he tells us this and everything else so unaffectedly that his book will be found absorbing even by those who may feel surfeited with music-hall reminiscences. Further, whilst being easy and entertaining reading, it gives of a very vital aspect of the English stage a picture which, while never spoilt by self-display from the author, is at every turn made vivid by personal experience.

H. K. FISHER

RADIO

ARIEL AND ALL HIS QUALITY. R. S. LAMBERT.
Gollancz. 10s. 6d.

THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION is to-day the most powerful political, instructional, and cultural instrument in this country. There are many newspapers, publishing firms, and educational establishments of different opinions. There is only one B.B.C.

In consequence, it is a matter of great interest and importance for every citizen to know the way in which the B.B.C. is organized, how its policy is formulated and has changed over the last decade, even the personalities of those who have made and are making the Corporation. It may be a matter of controversy whether Sir John Reith's policy proved him a great man; but it is a certainty that the position he held made him an important one.

Yet despite this interest, the B.B.C. has always been as shy about its organization and policy as it has been eager to publicise its activity. Information about the inner working of the Corporation has been jealously guarded; and while those who have come into casual contact with the B.B.C. have often expressed uneasiness at the atmosphere they found there, criticism could always be refuted as being ill-founded. Miss Hilda Matheson in the past was the only critic of broadcasting with a thorough knowledge of the institution.

Now Mr. R. S. Lambert, for ten years editor of *The Listener*, and plaintiff in the celebrated Talking Mongoose Case, has given us an inside picture of the B.B.C., portraits of its leading personalities, evaluation of its changing policy. To those on the fringe of the B.B.C. the value of *Ariel and All His Quality* will be chiefly that it confirms the impression they already held of the Corporation. Those unfamiliar with B.B.C. small-talk will be astonished at the paternalism, the one-sided conception of loyalty of Sir John's Directorship General. They will find especially illuminating Mr. Lambert's praise of the Regional Stations at the expense of London.

"There has never been, at Broadcasting House, any group whose job it was to comb the real London—as distinct from the

cosmopolitan West End ('In Town To-night') for programme material . . . There is too much ready-made talent of a journalistic sort in and round London . . . Only in the Regions can the young men and women on the programme staff go out into the countryside, get to know the wage-earning classes and their life and problems and bring them vividly before the microphone . . ."

Mr. Lambert makes no attempt to criticize or evaluate the whole work of the B.B.C. He writes only of what he experienced personally while in the service of the Corporation. His book is repetitive and gives the impression of having been dictated rather than written. But the story he has to tell is a good one (the Talking Mongoose Case deserved the space it received in the newspapers at the time), and his judgment is balanced. Even where he disagrees with B.B.C. policy he gives that policy a fair statement.

Of his character-studies the most interesting is that of Sir John Reith. Though Sir John has left the B.B.C., his appointment to the Ministry of Information makes this study timely. Dour and overbearing in his relations with subordinates, Sir John showed in the formative years of the B.B.C. a remarkable ability for placating important critics and ignoring the unimportant. These qualities should prove of the greatest importance to the newly-formed Ministry.

A. CALDER-MARSHALL

SELECTED BOOKS

THE LAUGHING MULATTO: THE STORY OF ALEXANDRE DUMAS. RUTHVEN TODD. Rich and Cowan. 10s. 6d.

IT MAY OR may not be a tribute to Mr. Todd's book on the elder Dumas that the reader will feel no curiosity

about its author ; he will be interested only in Dumas. Mr. Todd has austere refused to pour any flavour of his own into the book. It is mostly a bare, concise narrative of the literary and amorous adventures of the high-powered writer who knew the publicity value of a splendid waistcoat as shrewdly as he knew how to attract the most luscious heads to a season of rest on it. A long string of anecdotes, there is no analysis of character, no attempt to deal with Dumas as a literary artist, and no background of the flamboyant, long-tongued if rather florid times : Mr. Todd pays his readers the compliment of already possessing sufficient knowledge of these. And he does not supply a list of his sources or an index.

But a plain photograph of Dumas is certainly presented to us. We see the physically ill-favoured Mulatto setting out to conquer Paris, achieving this, and later bestraddling the world, with all the minor adventures thrown in. Mr. Todd presents his story with unflagging industry, even if he does write with a veiled face and a hand that is neither hot nor cold.

The tale, after a brief history of the Dumas antecedents, begins with the familiar and ever fresh picture of the poor provincial seeker of literary fame arriving in the capital with a small portmanteau and a large—in the case of Dumas, an almost shamelessly colossal—amount of faith. Success in the theatre was not long in coming, even if it was achieved by the quick method of plundering other men's work and dishing up the ingredients again with the flourish of a first-rate cook (which he was ; when his wageless kitchen staff struck, he would cook an excellent meal that his distinguished guests devoured). Soon, assured from behind his new garish waistcoats,

he was becoming impudent to his betters—(Balzac : “When I can do nothing else I’ll take to plays”; Dumas : “Then you’d better start at once”). Later, with the amazing popularity of his swashbuckling serials, enormous celebrity descended on him, and he rose to it with personal flourishes that incited fame to empty on him all the baubles in her bag. The fantastic, opulent life in the château which he built, and in the other establishments, is dealt with in some detail in this book, down to the lady of the moment who was in the habit of receiving casual callers seated on a chamber-pot. He attained a regal status. Entering a concert hall he greeted strangers and friends alike with royal benedictions. There were clownish political escapades. All the time his fiction-factory worked full shifts. He flung his enormous earnings about. At the table he was gluttonous. When in Spain he complained of the “ferocious virtue” of its girls, finding his royal progress impeded by it, as by the abominable food, so that he left as soon as possible. So numerous were his official decorations that people wondered where he could find a vacant corner on his person. In France the women continued to be far from fierce about their chastity, and the long procession of these adorers reached a grand finale in his capture, at the age of sixty-six, of the much prized and toasted actress Adah Menken, snatching her triumphantly from all rivals, to the malicious delight of all Paris. But Adah, who had scandalized London by her “naked” performance (in pink tights) on a circus horse, was his last flourish. Soon he was tottering, a weary penniless old man, to his son’s garden by the sea near Dieppe. And to this respectable, prudent son, author of the frail *La Dame Aux Camelias*, the old

rip said : " People say I've been wasteful. There's no truth in it. I came to Paris with two louis in my pocket—go and look in my waistcoat and you will find the two louis."

It is a good story, and Mr. Todd tells this part of it with, as I have suggested, a primness that possibly has its virtues.

RHYS DAVIES

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SIR ALBION BANERJI has retained his youth through a long life : he has not even one grey hair at over seventy : he is full of enthusiasms : he travels, reads and dances and does the social round in comfortable retirement in Putney. He has realized the ideal of living which he quotes approvingly from the contemporary Chinese critic Lin Yu Tang : " The symphony of life should end with a grand finale of peace and serenity, and material comfort and spiritual contentment, and not with a crash of a broken drum or crashed cymbals." And, certainly, Sir Albion has a right to tell us what the secret of longevity and happiness is.

But, unfortunately, when he comes to write he evades the whole question by an exposition of the " Hindu path of life set down in simple terms for the busy man ", reoriented with copious hints about mental and physical methods of well-being, about sex, love and marriage, garnered from his own travels and experiences.

Now, first of all, there is no exact Hindu path of life, Hinduism being the social law of caste and no one particular inclusive doctrine, but as many doctrines as there are people in the world, and considerably altered

by the English penal code which has been in operation since the Conquest. And the hints for the unhappy Westerner should have been frankly put down *à la* Arnold Bennett, "how to be happy on two thousand a year."

Sir Albion avers that the realities of cogito, ergo sum "have nothing to do with one's status, richness or poverty". But how can you *create* the self with which you are endowed at birth if you are a wage slave and your life is not your own to live? Even the service of the community which Sir Albion regards as the ultimate happiness is not in your power if you have no free will, except that you can choose to starve?

This is not to gainsay Sir Albion's sincerity. He himself has used his money and influence well. He is one of the founders, for instance, of the nationalist freedom movement in the Indian native states.

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little Spanish and less geography, blundered across Western Europe and Northern Africa on a mission of political detection, to discover facts which they would have received sooner if they had remained in London. The journey, however, gave the author an insight into the pro-Franco feelings of the diplomatic corps, which he could not have discovered elsewhere unless he had gone to Fleet Street or Whitehall, and a knowledge of the factional disputes among the foreign colony in Barcelona as great as that of Bloomsbury.

In Barcelona, Worsley fell in with two Americans, Rathbone and Hesketh, in charge of a Blood Transfusion Unit. These two men, fellow camp-followers, but American and so demonstrative, rhetorical, unashamedly theatrical, provided the author with the material to counteract his own sense of futility. His detective eye discovered each fault, each falsity of sentiment. Feeling a fraud, one welcomes the company of other frauds, greater frauds, different frauds. He watched them with delight as Fabre the dung beetle.

This Unit blundered South, until it reached the retreating army and refugees from Malaga. The account of that retreat, published already in part in *New Writing*, is the justification of this book. It is written with great sympathy and restraint, there being in the suffering of the refugees no political element to disturb the author's emotions. Almost as disturbed in his feeling of sympathy as the British businessman Jameson in his desire to close his eyes to suffering, Worsley is at his best when his material is so horrible that he has to underwrite.

On political judgments, he is as unsound as he is sometimes rash. He describes a conversation with a young boy in Almeria. The boy had been wounded

FRANK SWINNERTON ON BOOK TOKENS



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and was under age. He could hardly read, but spelt out the names of the European countries on a map. (Mr. Worsley is so sorry about the boy's illiteracy that he himself does not trouble to look in his Spanish dictionary how to spell *Alemania* and invents *Inglesia* as a startling variation of *Inglaterra*.) Despite the fact that he was more untutored in Spanish than the illiterate boy, Mr. Worsley ventures an analysis.

"He was just longing to find some way of going back into the fighting. Not, of course, because he was passionately keen about the issues. I doubt whether he could have understood them very clearly—for a benevolent church had allowed him to reach the age of sixteen without teaching him to read. No doubt if he had been born on Franco territory he would have been just as keenly anti-democrat as he was now anti-Fascist."

The sentence which I have italicized shows the fair-minded stupidity of the author. The fact of the boy's illiteracy, the pride of being able to spell out even names on a map is evidence of precisely the political lesson which the Government supporters had learned. But in order to show himself "fairminded", Mr. Worsley has with all his understanding *Allemanias*, *Inglesias*, and exotic *Vamoos'es*, the impertinent to interpret the soul of a boy whose language he was not sufficiently educated to understand.

In the last third of the book, we go up to the Jarama front and meet Giles Romilly and Tony. It meant a great deal to the author, that meeting. It meant a lot, perhaps, to Tony, to see "Cuthbert" appear from nowhere. But to this reader, it has the flaccidity of an anecdote of one of last year's parties, told by a gate-crasher.

A. CALDER-MARSHALL

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